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ITALY MISSION

A CRITICISM

OF

MISSIONARY METHODS

BY

REV. EVERETT S. STACKPOLE, D.D.

LEWISTON MAINE
PRINTED AT THE JOURNAL OFFICE
1894

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INTRODUCTION.

SOME one has written an account of his travels in Europe, entitled "Sights and Insights." This book is devoted solely to insights. We have no concern with natural scenery, imposing architecture, and works of art. We leave these things to the writers of guide-books. As an agent of the Methodist Episcopal Church we feel it our duty to make our report. How often the genial and eloquent Chaplain has told us that the way to get a good collection for the Missionary Society is to tell the people what has been done with the money already given. We agree with him perfectly. The contributors have a right to know all the facts. It is not just to tell them a few of the most encouraging facts and to conceal from them the failures. It is an ungracious task for those who stay at home to recount the defeats of those who go out to battle, but surely one who has suffered loss at the front may be permitted to point out the defective movements in the campaign and warn of ambuscades those who may renew the charge.

Bishop Thoburn has set us the good example of

criticising some missionary methods hitherto in vogue, and has shown very clearly the wisdom of acknowledging defeat. He says :

“ With regard to criticism . . . from whatever quarter, it is a mistake—a very serious mistake—for missionaries and their friends to resent such criticisms as hostile attacks directed against them and their work. No great public movement can afford to disapprove downright, straightforward and earnest criticism ; and even if it have a hostile element in it, it by no means follows that it must, in the nature of the case, be hurtful. It will have to be conceded that the missionary reports for the past half century have not been written with that spirit of frankness and candor, and with that conscientious regard for strict accuracy which the supporters of the work have a right to expect. For instance, if it be asked where the failures that have occurred in the mission fields of the world during the last half century have been recorded, it is not easy to obtain an answer. Pick up a hundred missionary reports and read them over, one after another, and it will be very rarely indeed that any mention will be found of a failure ; and yet failures have been occurring all the time. In any great work they must occur, in the very nature of the case, and ought to be recorded with all fidelity and frankness. . . . It is not considered beneficial to the interests of the great societies at home to spread anything before the people which would discourage givers, or weaken the confidence or

lessen the enthusiasm of the public. So long as this spirit is cultivated by the leaders of the movement, sharp and even hostile criticism may be more or less expected. It will never do, in the interest of any cause, however good, to call failure success, and to go on year after year affirming that the policy which may have been adopted is proving all that its friends had expected, while, as a matter of fact, it is proving the exact contrary.

“The time has fully come for the Church of Christ to rectify two mistakes which she has for some time been making in connection with this work. In the first place, she should resolutely and honestly look failure full in the face, and not for a moment shrink from it or pretend that she does not know that it exists when it is in plain sight before her. It is always wise to know the worst, and nothing is ever gained by concealing either from ourselves or others actual facts as they exist in connection with any work for which we are responsible. It will be said, no doubt, that there is no real failure in the mission field. Some good men affirm that it is impossible for us to say that any Christian work is, or ever has been, a failure; and we will be told over again for the thousandth time that we have nothing to do with the results, that it is our duty to work on and let God choose his own time for rewarding the labors of his servants; and that success may be so near at hand that what seems defeat to-day will change into victory to-morrow.

But all this kind of talk must be set aside as simply trifling with grave facts."¹

The Bishop could not have written more appropriately, if he had had the Italy Mission especially in view. We agree with him that the policy of concealment is a mistaken one. The failure to investigate thoroughly and to learn the real condition of a Mission is a still greater mistake. The refusal to listen to or to credit any one but the superintendent of a Mission is well-nigh willful blindness. If there has been failure it is far better to find it out and acknowledge it and change the policy. A change of administration is not enough. The hindrances to success may exist in the system far more than in the erroneous judgment of the administrator. A temporary lack of success may be passed over in silence, if more time be necessary to test a certain policy, or if the remedy has already been applied and better results may reasonably be expected in the future. But it is worse than folly to go on for more than twenty years, pursuing an erroneous policy and wasting missionary funds. Concealment of the true state of affairs in such a case is almost criminal, and often the only way to correct errors of policy and of administration is to let the public know them.

One's estimate of results depends upon one's ideal of what constitutes success. There are those who are contentedly unsuccessful, whose idea of success is,

¹ Methodist Review of 1891, pp. 869, 877.

as a facetious writer has said, “to find a vacant chair and to sit down in it,” who in fact never realize that they are accomplishing nothing. Others think themselves and are thought to be successful, if a good deal of noise and bustle with the rattle of machinery be heard. Others are contented if statistics can be so tabulated as to make success apparent to those who cannot look back of the reports. Others have achieved success, if they have gotten themselves well spoken of in the newspapers frequently, notwithstanding the suspicious state of any enterprise that needs to be puffed so often. Others live on the expectations of the future, and with some cheerfulness pursue a fruitless policy in hope that something good may eventually come out of it. All such ideas of success need to be corrected. It is far better to open our eyes to the present state of things, and to inquire the reason why our efforts have thus far been almost in vain. Perhaps we shall hear a voice saying, “Cast your nets on the right side of the ship.”

In order to succeed in any enterprise not only must means and agents be employed such as will lead to the desired results, but the end in view itself must be wise and good. It is necessary first of all to determine carefully the end sought. Can any one tell us what we are working for in Italy? Is it the salvation of individual souls? Is it the conversion of Catholics to Protestantism one by one? Is it the reform of the Roman Catholic Church? Is it the

dissemination of gospel light, the moral and religious education of the people, leading to disruption from Catholicism and the establishment of an independent Italian Protestant Church? Is it the building up of one out of half a dozen rival evangelical denominations, or is it to restore primitive Christianity? It may be replied that all these ends are in view. Then we inquire, which is the ultimate end, and are all the other subordinate ends really contributory to that? After these questions have been answered, then it will be time to ask whether the means and agents have been well selected and wisely used to accomplish our purpose.

Apparent success is sometimes real defeat. Especially is this true in the Mission field if quantity be sought rather than quality. A shrewd use of money will multiply the number of churches and adherents that do not long adhere. All the time the Mission may be growing weaker and weaker in all that constitutes a life-giving, victorious church. What Dr. Josiah Strong has said of the churches at home may also be true of some of our Missions abroad:—

“Our churches are growing, our missionary operations extending, our benefactions swelling, and we congratulate ourselves upon our progress; but we have only to continue making the same kind of progress long enough, and our destruction is sure.”

As this book is intended to be a discussion of some missionary methods, we have thought it best to

use the inductive method and to base our conclusions upon facts ascertained. Experience is a reliable though sometimes expensive teacher. Hence the narrative form of the discussion. It is to be feared that *a priori* reasonings have prevailed too much in the founding and conduct of Missions. It is easy for the generals who are “five thousand miles in the rear” to prescribe what ought to be and must be done. It is barely possible that they are not sufficiently informed of the real state of the campaign. It is of course quite improper to state in public print all the facts that the authorities need to know. They would be disgraceful to all concerned. It is hoped that the facts herein set forth, as well as the arguments founded upon them, may be of some service in leading to the correction of existing evils.

FOUR AND ONE-HALF YEARS IN THE ITALY MISSION

CHAPTER I

THE CALL AND JOURNEY

“WELL, we have a call to the mission field, but it is not to Mexico.”

“Where, then?”

“To Italy.”

“We are going.”

Such was the salutation and response on a December evening in 1887 on entering home after having spent the afternoon at a missionary convention. My wife had read the letter received from the Bishop, and hence the announcement. We were not wholly unprepared for the call, since the Missionary Secretary had informed us a few days before, that our appointment to a foreign Mission was under consideration of the authorities and had asked, “How would you like to go to Mexico?”

“Have not given the matter any consideration,” was the reply.

“Well, think of it, and let me know.”

It needed little thought, for we were ready to go to Mexico or anywhere else. Indeed this was included in the original consecration to the ministry. During the ten years spent in the ministry in Maine the entire Mission field had been a constant study, and it was a delight to collect and present to the people facts and statistics to show how the kingdom of God was getting on in the world. Every piece of good news and encouraging note from foreign fields was hailed as a signal of victory. All was taken for face value. We had not yet learned to read between the lines. Standing on the heights of faith and missionary intelligence we caught the foregleams of the advancing millennial day. It was no irksome task to take the missionary collection, going from house to house and from person to person and soliciting something to help save the world from superstition and sin. Geography became a fascinating study. Weeks were spent in making a wall-map of Africa, on which was traced every new discovery from Livingstone to Stanley, and in imagination the whole Dark Continent was cut up by railroads and dotted with schools and churches. Then fancy, impelled by desire and faith, flew over India, China, and Japan, and saw the speedy conquest of their millions for Christ. The names of missionaries in these and other lands were catalogued in our list of heroes, and on the frontier circuits of Maine we often felt as though we were hanging around the convalescent camp, nursing weak believers, while our

nobler brothers were fighting in the van. Once, however, the thought did strike us with some force that possibly not all missionary work was confined to foreign lands. It was the day we arrived at our first \$300 circuit and found a letter saying that English residents in Chili had pledged \$2,400 per annum for the support of a missionary and wife to teach and preach. The greatness of the financial inducement took the glory all out of that call, and the question arose whether it were not a temptation of the devil rather than a providential indication of the divine will. Does it not demand more of consecration, self-denial, and the missionary spirit to stay at home than to go? We concluded that it does, and therefore refused the call.

A sense of unworthiness and of a lack of spiritual qualifications always prevented our becoming a candidate for missionary honors. Common grace would do for plodders in the home field, but *gratia specialissima* was needed for those who face the dangers and privations, the isolation and lonesomeness, the idolatry and superstition, the ignorance and vice of foreign lands. Who is sufficient for these things? It was enough for ordinary laborers in the Lord's vineyard to work and pray, collect money, and help awaken missionary enthusiasm. Surely the home work ought not to be abandoned, and it was doubtless our duty to bear the cross patiently and stay at home. So we reasoned, and succeeded in contenting ourselves in inglorious freedom from battle-scars.

But when the call came like lightning out of a clear sky, we seemed at once to recognize a graciously providential preparation in the previous years of enthusiastic study. The heart was ready for the response. We can not say that we were insensible to the honor conferred. The Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the cause of Christ, and it may be that the honor of separation from home and friends was esteemed as quite equivalent to that received from the infliction of stripes. Certainly it was a discipline not less severe. Some fancy that missionaries have great privileges of travel, of acquiring stores of knowledge, of learning new languages, etc., and these privileges are not to be despised, but such attractions fade and shrink into small proportions after a few months of separation from old friends and religious associations. The greater the privation and loss, the greater the honor. We remember distinctly to have said in our last sermon before departure that no greater honor could be conferred upon any one than to be called to the foreign mission field. That person who said that he would rather found a mission than a kingdom was right, and we sometimes wish he had the privilege of attempting it.

We cite a portion of the Bishop's letter :

"DEAR BROTHER : Would you like to go to Italy as a missionary ? I have been for a long time seeking a suitable man to re-enforce our work there ; and you

have been so recommended to me by a sufficient number of competent judges who know you well that I am now ready to appoint you if you will consent to go.

"This appointment is one of the most critically important in any of our mission fields anywhere. We have but two Americans in the Italy Conference. We greatly need another at once :

"1. To give the Church the benefit of one more intelligent judgment as to plans and methods of work in evangelization among Roman Catholics.

"2. To carry over some more genuine Methodist evangelical leaven.

"3. To aid in establishing a theological school.

"4. To stand in any possible gap which may be produced by the death or sickness of either of the American brethren now there, or by any other cause.

"We *must* begin to train up native ministers as soon as possible. What relation you would have to that work, I cannot now say. Doubtless it would be best for brethren who know the language to begin the work ; but you have been selected because of your supposed competency to aid in it after acquiring the language. Your first duty would probably be to learn the language, meanwhile informing yourself about the situation, and perhaps assisting in the supervision of the Mission as Presiding Elder of one out of two or three Districts, and in the business affairs of the Mission. These matters of detail could easily be arranged.

"Of course I need not dwell at all on the opportunity of personal development and varied usefulness which a residence in Italy would open to you. I am informed that you have given considerable study to the missionary work and are deeply interested in it.

"Please let me hear from you soon. Take a few days for prayer and consultation, if you wish, and then let me know how the matter strikes you.

"May God guide you to a right decision.

"Yours very truly,

_____,"

To this we replied that no time was needed for consideration, having reflected upon it ten years or more; that while a call to Mexico, India, or China would have received an affirmative reply, still the Italy Mission presented some special attractions. The privilege was asked of completing the Conference year in the pastorate, but this was denied, since the needs of the Mission were pressing. So in a few weeks we said, as we supposed and as in so many cases it proved to be, a last farewell to brief and to life-long friends and set out for a new land and a new life.

Our enthusiasm was somewhat chilled at the office of the Missionary Society in New York. The General Secretaries were away. The person in charge did not seem to know or care to communicate anything special concerning Italy or best route of getting there. The existence of a Manual of Instructions to Missionaries was first revealed to us by its accidental

discovery in the library of one of the missionaries in Italy. As for salary nothing was ever said about it in correspondence or at the office. It was fixed by the estimating committee in Italy after our arrival, at about twice the amount which our ideas of missionary life had led us to expect. We were assured that a generous salary was necessary for comfortable support. That depends of course upon the style of living adopted. This is true, however, that an American missionary in Italy needs more money to live comfortably than would be required to live in the same manner in an American city of the same size. Foreigners are generally over-charged for everything they buy, and their ignorance of the language and customs of the people makes economy very difficult. To require American missionaries to live on the same salaries as native preachers would be a great inequality from simply a financial point of view. Their expenses are necessarily much greater. To ask a man who is worth or is receiving \$1,000 at home to serve for \$500 in a foreign field can only be justified on the ground that the Missionary Society is poor, or that he should manifest the spirit of self-sacrifice to the natives. There are many ways of showing this, but the native preachers generally fail to recognize the self-denial of the missionary so long as his stipend is greater than theirs.

A word may here be said about traveling expenses. The entire bill for transportation of household furni-

ture and books, custom-house expenses, railway and steamer fares, hotel expenses, etc., of three persons from Maine to Rome was \$475. When we afterward learned that over \$900 were charged to the Missionary Society for traveling expenses of a single man from Europe to take charge of a church of immigrants in America, we concluded that our traveling expenses were not exorbitant. We had raised money by hard work for Missions and so felt conscientiously bound to economize in every way possible; he had constantly received money from the Society and never exerted himself to raise any. As corporations have no souls he felt at liberty to spend all he pleased, *i.e.*, all he could get. But how he succeeded in making his traveling expenses more than \$900, has always been a mystery. He had doubtless studied economy in the same school with that Italian preacher who for moving expenses of himself and books from Perugia to Melfi, a distance of about 250 miles, sent in to the treasurer of the Mission an estimate of \$500. By close figuring he afterward cut it down to half that sum, but when only \$40 were offered, he indignantly withdrew from the ministry, after, however, having dallied in correspondence and drawn his full pay for two months. We may have occasion to speak of him again.

We sailed from New York to Liverpool February 11, 1888. We will not weary the reader by a description of the disagreeable features of the passage. How green and beautiful appeared the shores of Ireland.

In London new inspiration was gained by listening to some of the living prophets and visiting the tombs of the dead. To walk through the aisles of Westminster and around City Road Chapel, to call to memory the lives of the good and great, to look upon the spot where Christian heroes had suffered martyrdom, to visit shrines rendered sacred by age and historical and religious associations, were privileges blessed in their influence.

Paris detained us only for a day of needed rest. An all night's ride brought us to Geneva, where we had our first coveted glimpse of the Italian Mission. Here we had a church of forty or fifty members, gathered and organized under the auspices of the Scotch Presbyterians. A young student in the Theological School of the Swiss Free Church, of Waldensian family, and maintained largely by funds received from the Educational Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had served as pastor, and after his graduation the church concluded to call itself Methodist on condition that this pastor remain and the Missionary Society pay his salary of \$720 and all current expenses, minus such contributions as they might choose to give. They continued for some time to worship in the Swiss National Church built by Italian refugees from Venice, in the sixteenth century. The forms of worship were all Presbyterian, even to the wearing of the ministerial gown in the pulpit. Nobody knelt in prayer. There was an audience on Sunday

of about thirty. In the afternoon we visited our German Mission in a little hall on the hill. Here everybody sang and knelt in prayer. The preacher talked from the heart and then called on one of the older members to lead in prayer. The spirit and conduct of the meeting was thoroughly Methodist and in striking contrast with the Italian service. Giving a church or a congregation a new name does not change its character. It might be interesting to note that one year later this pastor was transferred to America at his own request. When the time of departing came, he found that he preferred to remain in Geneva. So he persuaded his church to abandon Methodism, and sent a telegram to the Presiding Elder, withdrawing from the ministry and saying that the church at Geneva would make itself independent. The Presiding Elder and Bishop hastened to the scene and persuaded the church to remain in the fold of Methodism. The pastor begged that his attempted secession should not be made known, withdrew his withdrawal, and went to America, where report says that he is doing good service in an Italian Methodist church.

Of course we could not leave Geneva without seeing the house where John Calvin lived and the church where he preached. Here, then, was born the system called by the terrible name of Calvinism, that we have learned to shudder at from infancy. We stood also over his grave, marked with a very small

stone with simply the initials J. C. The stone is amply large and attractive to commemorate the theologian, but does not do justice to the strength and greatness of the reformer. His influence upon large bodies of Protestants will live on long after his defunct predestinarianism shall have been buried out of sight. The Roman Catholics as well as the Unitarians cannot forget that he had a part in the burning of Servetus, and when persecutions and inquisitions are mentioned, still parade that disgraceful piece of history as a counter-argument against Protestantism in general. It is sometimes said, and we have heard it recently from an eminent speaker who ought to know better, that the Roman Catholics would burn the Protestants at the stake now if they had the power. We think not, not because they have more religion now than they had then—they had lots of it then, such as it was—but because Christian civilization has mightily advanced, and its mitigating force is felt in every part of Christendom. Thank God, the instruments of torture will never again be used in defence of any form of Christianity.

The journey from Geneva to Milan was exceedingly uncomfortable. Through ignorance of the language we switched off on the wrong track at Culoz, had to return, wait several hours, and take a slow train. The cars were very insufficiently heated, and the cold was intensely felt. We intended to spend the night at Turin and visit our church there,

but did not arrive till five o'clock in the morning and so went right on to Milan. We were all sick with colds and used up through the weariness of thirty hours' travel and lack of sleep. At Milan we were entertained by the Presiding Elder of the Northern District, whose thoughtful invitation to visit him on our way to Rome reached us before sailing from New York. How pleasant to sit and talk before the open fire! The Italy Mission was the constant theme. Every preacher and every station was photographed, of course, from his point of view, and necessarily we could but see things as he saw them. The view was not captivating, and we were both fully convinced that there must be a radical revolution in men and methods. For our part we have never seen any reason for changing that opinion. Indeed, the experience of the years since has constantly emphasized it. It is easier, however, to criticise the administration of another than to see the same faults in one's own. A few years' experience as superintendent of the Mission might lead us to think that the present condition of things is almost ideal.

After two days we moved on toward Rome, the seat of the Annual Conference to be held the following week. We spent a night at Bologna and heard a sermon against suicide by our preacher in charge. An audience of fifty or so had been collected by means of handbill advertisements of his theme. Our property at Bologna consists of a church, a shop, and five

apartments, one of which is used as a parsonage, and the rest are rented. The income, together with the contributions of the congregation, ought to be sufficient to pay all expenses of the church, including pastor's salary, but instead the annual estimates have asked from the Missionary Society the pastor's salary in full and a large share of the current expenses. Until 1891 no account was made in the annual estimates of the income from these rents. These and other rents were used as an incidental fund.

The preacher in charge at Bologna was an ex-priest, Doctor in Philosophy and in Canon and Civil Law. Of the merits of his sermon we could not judge. About a month later we attended a so-called prayer-meeting in this church. The preacher opened with an invocation, the phraseology of which was taken from the Mass, a thing quite customary in many churches in Italy. Then he announced a hymn which was sung very slowly and dolefully. Then he read a portion of Scripture, with brief exposition, and offered prayer. Then he expounded another portion of Scripture and prayed again. Another hymn. Then he expounded and prayed the third time. Another hymn and the benediction. No one but the preacher had opportunity to say a word. Perhaps experience had taught him that no one in his congregation had anything to say in a prayer-meeting. The audience endured all this patiently. They call anything a good meeting which calls together a respectable number of

hearers. As for class-meeting, the thing was entirely unknown. They had a Sunday-school, and this was the way it came about, as we learned from a member of the church and from a subsequent pastor. To attract the children a prize was offered every Sunday; it might be a pair of shoes or stockings, a cap, a handkerchief, some fruit or confectionery. As a prize for every scholar would be rather too expensive, a species of lottery was instituted, and the fortunate, or unfortunate, one got the prize. A year later the successor of this pastor discontinued the practice, and immediately the children began to inquire: "Are we not to have our prizes?" "Perhaps at Christmas time, but not every Sunday," was the reply. "Then we won't come to Sunday-school," they said, and the following Sunday not one of the forty children appeared. There has been no Sunday-school in the Methodist Episcopal Church at Bologna from that day to this.

Next morning we hastened on to Florence, where we spent the Sabbath. All its varied attractions were overlooked at this time. The only thing of much interest to us was the work of the Mission. Our church here for several years had had the largest membership of any in the Conference, reporting one year, 197. The church edifice was built by the Jesuits four centuries ago, afterward converted into a private house, and then bought and reconstructed into a church with the parsonage over it. At this time it had two preachers,

and the audience that Sunday was about sixty persons. It struck us at once that a church of that size did not need two pastors, especially as there were no outlying appointments, but we found that such had been the custom in several places, even where the membership and audience were much smaller. The work was considered too severe for one pastor. How could a priest who had been accustomed to have an acolyte wait upon him get along without an assistant? There were services two evenings in the week besides Sunday. Thus each pastor had one sermon and a so-called prayer-meeting or meeting for Bible study each week. One of these meetings might have been called a class-meeting. To lighten the labors of these two pastors they had a Bible woman, paid \$240 per year by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Her services were thought to render pastoral visitation quite unnecessary. At any rate, very little of it has ever been done in the Italy Mission. One of these pastors received a salary of \$960 per year and house rent, and the other, a single man, received \$600. Then the organist was paid \$60 and the sexton \$50. If we add the expenses of gas, fuel, repairs, hymn books, insurance and incidentals, we find that to hold an average congregation of seventy-five persons in Florence the Missionary Society paid out about \$2,000 annually. To be sure the Minutes report an average congregation of 150, but we can testify by repeated countings during four years that the average was not

more than seventy-five. Some Italians also have a fondness of swelling the statistics, and guess at the size of the audience without counting. We once asked one of the preachers why he did not cut down the statistical report for the Minutes to actual facts, and he replied : “ That would not please the Presiding Elder.” Every preacher in the Italian Mission knows that all the authorities on both sides of the ocean want to see every year in the Reports an increase of members, probationers, conversions, etc., and they are accommodating enough to make the desired increase. As the state of the Mission as a whole is judged by the annual statistical report, so they argue that their particular charge will be judged in like manner by the superintendent, and this is another motive for swelling the statistics. This evil is not confined to the Italy Mission, yet owing to certain peculiarities in the average Italian character it would be wise to make an unusually liberal discount in estimating the actual number of members, etc., in that Mission.

The next day we went on to Rome to be in time for the Annual Conference. We were deprived of the society of our two pastors during the journey, as they preferred to ride in the smoking-car. After getting settled in a *pension* on Via della Croce we sauntered out on the Pincian hill to see the Eternal City. Historical recollections come trooping up at every glance. The busts of Roman statesmen, scholars and warriors during over two thousand years, line the walks of the

public garden. Here is a pillar to the memory of Galileo, and the inscription says he was condemned for having seen the world move around the sun. That could not have been erected before 1871. Yonder is the Capitoline hill and beyond are the ruined palaces of the Cæsars. In front is the Pantheon, and towering in the distance across the Tiber is the massive pile of St. Peter's and the Vatican. Here at last is the citadel of the hostile forces. Here is the center of that huge system of error and superstition that we have come so far to spend our life in opposing. The might of ancient Rome vanished before the presence of our northern barbaric ancestors. Why may not this new and mightier Rome be conquered by weapons of Gospel truth? Not in our day to be sure, but it is a great privilege to have even a small part in the beginning of the mighty contest. Such thought in the midst of such scenes and associations inflames enthusiasm. We remember to have read something like this in the newspaper correspondence of transient visitors. The enthusiasm wanes with a study of the problem and an attempt to solve it. Still we could not help then exclaiming with Paul, "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you who are at Rome also."

Our little church at Piazza Poli has the honor of being the first Protestant church built in Rome, and ought to be preserved as a historical landmark, if for no other reason. It is in the midst of a dense popu-

lation, and it would be difficult to select a better site for evangelization. We are therefore sorry to hear that it has been sold, in order to realize money with which to build a school, church and publishing house combined in an aristocratic quarter of the city. This is robbing Peter to pay Paul. Have we already begun in the Mission field to adopt the policy of down-town churches at home? Must we sell the edifice in the midst of the poor in order to build in the midst of the rich? It will be said that the church was not adapted to the needs of the work. It is true rather that the church did not adapt itself to the needs of the people. The fact that its membership and congregation disappeared was not at all due to its location, but to the fact that the preacher in charge withdrew from us and joined another denomination, and his congregation followed him. No successful efforts were made to gather another congregation. The parsonage connected with this church was once called a "palace," but through faulty drainage and lack of sun is somewhat damp and by some thought unfit to live in. Some slight repairs would put both church and parsonage in good condition. Inside, the church is rather dark and gloomy, perhaps the fault of the Italian architect and frescoer. Who ever saw a light, airy, cheerful church in Italy? The light must be dim in order to be religious.

Here the Annual Conference assembled March 14, 1888. The Conference did not impress us by its

devotional spirit. At the half-hour morning prayer-meeting the leader was generally late, and very few members of the Conference were present, or they came straggling in after they had finished their chat and cigar in front of the church. It struck us as a strange spectacle to see fifteen or twenty Methodist preachers all smoking at the very door of the church, and later in the session we introduced with some opposition some vigorous resolutions on the subject of temperance, three-fourths of which our interpreter failed to translate when they were read to the Conference. However, the custom was introduced of having at each Annual Conference, as in America, a report on temperance and against the use of tobacco. They always adopt the resolutions and most of them continue to drink wine, to use snuff, and to smoke as before.

At this Conference two were admitted into full connection and to the question, "Will you wholly abstain from the use of tobacco?" responded affirmatively, and were seen smoking on the street the next day. By agitation on this subject some members of the Conference were afterward induced to abandon the use of wine and tobacco, but efforts at reform in this direction have been neutralized in part by lax interpretations of the Discipline given by some of our authorities.

The most important event of this Conference was the trial of one of the Presiding Elders. One

Palmieri, an ex-priest who has now been back and forth three times from Romanism to Protestantism, had caused such a disturbance in his station that it was thought necessary to suspend him, which action developed many heated words and much bad temper. Charges were preferred against him by the Presiding Elder for unchristian words and tempers, and he brought counter-charges for maladministration. The trial of the Presiding Elder was ordered first. It lasted over two days and cost the Missionary Society over \$100. On one specification it might perhaps be allowed that the Presiding Elder had exceeded the strict disciplinary limits of his authority, but the case was an urgent one, and in the Mission field it is sometimes quite impracticable, if not impossible, to use all the red tape of the Discipline. In getting rid of unworthy members of Conferences and churches there ought to be an easier process than our Discipline allows. A church trial is no help to Protestantism in Italy. It was evident from the beginning of the trial that a certain faction of the Conference was determined to condemn the accused. Seven ex-priests voted solidly against him on every one of the five specifications, without regard to evidence. On one specification the vote was nine for sustaining it to eleven against it. The trial was an attempt to get rid of a man against whom a portion of the Conference was prejudiced for other reasons. At the conclusion of the trial, in order to save going over

substantially the same ground in the trial of Palmieri, we moved that he be requested to withdraw, and after some hesitation he did so. He went to one of the Presiding Elders and got two hundred francs to pay his traveling expenses to and from Conference; then he went to the other and got one hundred francs more for the same purpose, not informing him that he had already received two hundred francs. After this he put in a claim for three months' salary and moving expenses of his family, a bill amounting to over one thousand francs, and this was paid by the Presiding Elder whom he had tried to have expelled from the Conference. At the same time he made a so-called confession, saying that he had been instigated by the other Presiding Elder to bring charges against him. We have every reason to believe that this was utterly false, as Palmieri before and since proved himself to be of worthless character. We never had any doubt that he made the so-called confession in order to get the thousand francs, but the money was paid, not for bribery, but to get Palmieri away from the place where he was trying to ruin our church by his talk, and because it had been the custom for years, that if a member of the Conference left our work for any cause he should receive a bonus of three months' salary. Thus it sometimes happened that after an unfaithful minister had done all the damage he could, the Missionary Society paid him three months' salary in order to get rid of him. It was a grave blunder

to pay the money in this case, and the exceedingly unwise policy was afterward changed on our motion by a unanimous vote in a certain committee. We learn, however, on the best of authority, that as late as 1893 two months' salary was paid under circumstances very like those mentioned above. Thus it is profitable business for a preacher to ruin his charge and then withdraw from the ministry. He draws his pay for two or three months without working at all. Palmieri went back to the priesthood, where he remained less than a year. He again turned Protestant and was sent by a French Missionary Society to Hayti as an evangelist. After his withdrawal from our church he wrote a pamphlet against Methodism and all its representatives in Italy, in which more truth was told than was acceptable. It was at first thought best by some to bring him to trial before the civil court for defamation of some of our ministers, but after reflection the process was abandoned and the Missionary Society paid the bills incurred.

The Italian Conference was well characterized by one of our bishops when he said it was the greatest talking machine he ever saw. Three or four would talk at the same time if the President would allow it, and sometimes he had to suffer it in spite of his efforts to preserve order. Many seem to have learned the diplomatic art of saying nothing in a great many words. How easily the "*bellissima lingua*" flows from the Italian tongue. They seem never to hesitate for

a word, whether the idea comes or not. They talk right on and gesture all over. The facial expressions are wonderful. By different shrugs of the shoulders, accompanied by movements of the features, they express, better than words could do, surprise, doubt, uncertainty, ignorance, disdain, wonder, denial, fear, helplessness, defiance, pride, and no one knows what not. The fingers are worked as dexterously as those of a pianist. The Italian speaker is in himself a whole school of expression. Words are almost unnecessary to convey thought, and are poured forth for the simple delight of talking.

Allusion has been made to the expense of an Annual Conference in Italy. Let us compare it with the German and Swiss Conferences. The Italian preacher travels second-class, except sometimes when he travels at his own expense; the German travels third-class. The fare in Italy is paid by the Missionary Society; in Germany and Switzerland it is paid by collections taken in the various churches. The Italian preacher is allowed ten francs per day in the larger cities for hotel expenses and eight francs in smaller cities, paid also by the Missionary Society from the day he leaves home till his return; the German lodges with the members of the church where the Conference is held, often in very humble quarters, and all the members dine together, the dinner being paid for also by collections made in the churches. Thus the Annual Conferences in Germany and Swit-

erland cost the Missionary Society nothing and are a means of grace and good-fellowship. The Annual Conference in Italy costs the Missionary Society about \$800. The members divide, the Bishop and American members in one hotel, the ex-priest faction in another, the Waldensian element in another, etc. We made a proposition at the Conference of 1891 that instead of ten francs per day we ask for only six, since excellent board could be obtained in *pensions* for five and six francs per day. The proposition was received with scorn and insult and voted down by an overwhelming majority. It would be very easy to make arrangements with some *pension* or hotel to board the entire Conference for five francs per day each without wine. Thus \$125 would be saved for evangelization, the temperance cause would be advanced, and Christian fellowship would be cultivated ; or better still, in some cities the entire Conference might find lodgings and breakfasts in the homes of the people, if they would be so humble as to accept such fare, and the other meals might be had together as in the German and Swiss Conferences. Our German preachers live with the poor people and share their hospitality, and the poor are not less hospitable than the rich. A Doctor of Divinity and Professor in Germany told us how he had boarded, as a preacher, with a family where there was only one room in the house. It is of no use to disguise the facts. Our Italian preachers are too proud to associate familiarly with the poor people

to whom they preach, and will never do it so long as the Missionary Society will pay their bills at some good hotel. This reform is of vital importance. We are not advocating a petty scheme to save a few dollars, but a plan that will bring the preachers and people into closer sympathy with one another. In Italy our preachers can not reach the rich, and they will not mingle with the poor except officially.

CHAPTER II

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

OUR appointment was that of a Theological Instructor, and we were like a *cavaliere senza cavallo*, or horseman without a horse. It was decided to have a Theological School as soon as practicable, but where, when or how, no one as yet knew. Our first business was to learn the language, and as the Tuscan dialect is the purest Italian, we went to Florence and committed the blunder of trying to learn Italian in an English private family. It is true the family had lived in Italy thirty years or more and could speak Italian as well as English, but as a matter of fact they always spoke English with us. In the household we heard a little Italian every day. We studied the grammars, dictionaries, newspapers, etc., faithfully. We went to every service in the church and listened to what we could not understand, doubting whether we were doing penance or working on the Lord's Day. We had a half-hour's instruction every day in the language from a young ex-priest, for which we gave him an equivalent of instruction in English. Later we began to teach English to a class in the Theological School.

Now nearly all this was a mistake. That is not the way to learn to speak a language. The ear needs education more than the eye. To learn a language quickly one needs to be where it is heard continually, and be obliged to speak it if one speaks at all. He should live in a family where that language alone is spoken. A single man can do this, and ought to do it for the first year or two in Italy, but the two unmarried missionaries who followed us to Italy have suffered from the same blundering policy of being thrust into the Theological School to teach English until they should learn Italian. It would be about as easy to learn the language in America with a private instructor one hour each day. In fact the language of the common people can never be learned in a school. We acquired some book-knowledge of Italian and mastered a theological vocabulary that would do for purposes of instruction but was a very inadequate preparation for preaching to the common people.

The Italian language is not difficult to learn. Its words are chiefly degenerated Latin and so have many analogies with the English language, more than half of which comes from the same source. Its construction is less complex than classical Latin and has more analogy to Greek. Its reflexive mode reminds one of the middle voice in Greek ; the article is Greek rather than Latin ; and very many words are Greek Italianized. All this comes from the early settlement of Sicily and southern Italy by Greek colonists, and

from the influence of Greek literature. In some parts of southern Italy and Sicily dialects are still spoken that a modern Greek would understand more readily than a Tuscan. The dialect that most resembles the ancient Latin is now spoken in the island of Sardinia, the original language not having been corrupted by the invasion of northern conquerors. The peculiarity of this dialect is the termination of the nouns and adjectives in *u*, the ablative of the fourth declension. The *contadini* or peasants of Piedmont would not be able to understand those of southern Italy. All educated Italians speak the pure, Tuscan dialect, and many who cannot speak it understand it. It is taught in all the public schools. Still, for the thorough evangelization of Italy men are needed who are familiar with the various dialects of the people. One might evangelize Wales, speaking in English, but the Welsh would be far more effective in many communities.

The pronunciation of Italian is comparatively easy. There are no useless letters in any word. Every vowel and consonant is sounded or serves to modify the sound of the following letter. The English language has half a dozen or more sounds for some of its vowels; the Italian has an open and a close sound for e and o and only one sound for the other vowels. The language is strikingly free from guttural sounds. It is pronounced "trippingly on the tongue." Nobody but a Spaniard can excel the Italian in trilling the r. They never run the consonants together.

A double l or double n is sounded like two l's or two n's. The syllable ends almost always in a vowel, and the language is thus exceedingly well adapted to singing. In English the singer, after prolonging the note upon the vowel of the syllable, has to tack on a consonant or two, or else leave his audience in wearisome ignorance of what he is singing. Often the sentiment of the song is sacrificed to the harmony of sweet but meaningless sounds. The Italian singer is not bothered in this way. The meaning of the word is all expressed when he gets to the final vowel. The Italians can hardly conceive how a word may properly end in a consonant. Hence they Italianize many foreign words by adding a final i or e.

It is often said that children will pick up a language more readily than adults, and it is true that by mingling with other children they catch the peculiar accents and inflections of the voice. The Florentines almost chant as they speak, with a constant tendency toward the rising inflection. The children make music of conversation. An adult learner can scarcely imitate this. It is not, however, necessary to correct speaking, and is not heard in many parts of Italy. A child acquires quickly a child's vocabulary, and by constant chattering learns to speak fluently. He has learned the language when he has mastered five hundred words. He can express all his ideas with these. An adult must often master five thousand words, and he will then stammer whenever a new idea strikes him. If

an adult would mingle constantly with children and confine himself to their vocabulary, he would learn a language, we fancy, more quickly than a child, and we have some evidence to prove this. The adult ordinarily can not do this, and so has to resort to grammars and dictionaries. Especially a reflective and not over-talkative person must see the word and fix its meaning in the memory before he understands it with the ear. One of the best exercises is to read aloud from some book not too difficult, taking in without much effort the general sense and not stopping to look up in the lexicon every unknown word. The known context will often suggest the definition of the new word encountered. Macaulay used to learn a language in three months by reading the New Testament in that language, but he had a phenomenal memory. For one who is familiar with the New Testament there is no more helpful exercise than this, but if he knows not his English Bible almost by heart, he may as well read almost any other Italian book. For purity of language and simplicity of style as well as for the interesting character of the subject matter the student of Italian would do well to read Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi* and De Amici's *Cuore*. Both have been translated into English. Some prefer to plunge at once into the *Divina Comedia* of Dante, but soon lose their enthusiasm and fail to appreciate its beauties. A child might as well try to learn English by reading Chaucer. One should let poetry alone till one has mastered prose.

To learn a new language in middle life is no small task. A person is not aware how much time and effort he has spent in learning his mother tongue until he tries to speak in another language. It is true that in a year one can learn to read and mentally translate a new language and use some phrases sufficiently well for traveling purposes. Often then he thinks he has learned the language, but if he really intends to learn it thoroughly and use it effectively in public discourse or in writing, two or three years of close study will only reveal to himself his ignorance of the language. Some of our authorities have amused the Italian Conference by attempting to read our ritual service after a few weeks' study of the language, and one expressed the confident opinion that he could learn two or three European languages in a year's time.

“He jests at scars who never felt a wound.”

The blunders of learners are often very amusing. A brother missionary will never forget how at a restaurant with Bishop Mallalien we called for *pesci* instead of *pesche* and so got fish instead of peaches; nor do we forget how he once complained of *mal di tasca* when he should have said *mal di testa*. The latter phrase means headache, and the former, if it means anything, would have to be translated *pocket-ache*, perhaps a too frequent malady with the impecunious. The precise equivalent for an English word or phrase is often wanting. The Italian has no word for *home*, *earnestness*, *manliness*, and many other

words that Americans can not do without. On the other hand, they have some fine shades of thought that have no equivalent expression in English. Figurative expressions are the most difficult to translate. The figure must be changed and often loses its force. Sometimes, however, it loses nothing in the transfer. To carry coals to Newcastle is to "carry leaves to Valombrosa." A sharper is a *cavaliere d'industria*, a knight of industry. To express the thought that one is lacking in the upper story the Germans have a similar phrase, *Er ist nicht ganz richtig im oberstübchen*, he is not quite right in the little upper room, but the Italian saying is better, *gli manca il primo volume*, he lacks the first volume.

To listen to a strange language with the effort to catch its meaning is a necessary practice, but a wearisome labor. We go to church as often as possible and listen studiously if not devoutly. At first the discourse is a queer jumble of unmeaning sounds. The words seem all run together. After a little time we begin to catch a word here and there, and while we are trying to connect it with other words in the sentence the speaker goes on and leaves us. Week after week we add to our vocabulary and are quite encouraged when we can catch every word in a short sentence. Then we hear a new speaker and begin to doubt whether we shall ever learn the language. After many months we get the drift of the sermon, but miss the finer thoughts and rhetorical embellish-

ments. Now at every hearing some new flash of light breaks in upon the mind; we remember new words used and run to a lexicon on returning home. No book quite so interesting as the dictionary. We have read it by the hour day after day. After a while we quite discard the Italian-English dictionary and use one wholly Italian. Thus we learn to hear and understand by constant attention. There seems to be no mental rest. Through sheer weariness of listening, the attention is often distracted in the midst of a sermon, and we wander off in reverie. Especially is this the case if the preacher has a *maximum* of words with a *minimum* of ideas. We don't think the Italian language is adapted to putting an idea into words pithily. The words are too long. A half dozen monosyllabic words of English will often state a great truth clearly, in a nut-shell. This is not frequent in Italian. One must understand words and sentences with the ear before one can speak them. Here arises the principal difficulty. The adult learner is not willing to stumble along like a babe. He wants to feel sure of his sentence before he begins. He hesitates to say even as much as he knows. His own voice sounds strange to him. The words have not the significance of the English equivalent. He has not yet learned to think in Italian. His speaking is all preceded by mental translation. He does not feel sure that he has found the right expression. He breaks off his sentence at an unknown word or goes

back and corrects himself. He is specially embarrassed if there is a person listening who understands both English and Italian. It is so much more pleasant for all concerned to have the help of an interpreter. As a result, he speaks only when he must, or is impelled by the determination to learn Italian at all costs. Thus to speak as well as to read and listen is a mental strain. Conversation is no recreation till after two years of study. The Italian hearer is very courteous, in fact too much so for the learner. He tells you that your pronunciation is excellent and that you speak beautifully. If it suits his argument he will tell somebody else that you cannot make yourself understood. Still it is quite encouraging to have one's stammering utterances received with smiles and "*bravos*," and too constant correction would discourage further effort. Happy is he who has a wise and faithful teacher.

CHAPTER III

ITALIAN METHODISM

THE Methodist Episcopal Church in Florence has the largest membership and is, on the whole, we think, the best church we have in Italy. It has been established more than fifteen years. Under the eight years' pastorate of Rev. Teofilo Gay the present church edifice was bought and remodeled, and a membership was collected of nearly two hundred. It is true that a part of these came from the absorption of a Wesleyan church. Its pastor, the Rev. C. Tollis, was led to leave the Wesleyans and unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and quite naturally his church members followed his example. In consequence the Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission thought best to withdraw from Florence. Brother Tollis became the successor of Brother Gay and continued pastor three years, when he was succeeded by the Rev. S. V. Ravi. Under both these pastors there was a gradual purifying process. There were many unworthy members. Some had to be encouraged to withdraw; some got disaffected with the pastor and stayed away; others left because of the introduction of novelties and of a mild and partial enforcement of Methodist

discipline. Some effort was made, especially under the pastorate of Brother Ravi, to make this a Methodist church. Hitherto it had been simply a Waldensian church with another name. We remember to have read a printed notice posted on the inside of the church, which read thus: If any one wishes to become evangelical, let him give his name to the pastor or to one of the *consiglieri*. This was the name given to stewards and class-leaders. They are now called *economi* and *conduttori di classe*. The phrase "become evangelical" expresses the too common conception of conversion. It denotes an intellectual change of opinion or belief. A person who is disgusted with the Papacy or with the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church gives his name to the pastor and is duly enrolled as a probationer. He does not attend class-meeting, because generally there is none. His voice is never heard in prayer or testimony. He makes no confession of sin and gives no evidence of repentance. The necessity of this in his case has probably never dawned on him, for has he not been properly baptised, and does he not partake of the eucharist regularly once a month? In the majority of cases he is not asked to contribute anything regularly for the maintenance of the church. In due time he is received into full membership. He attends more or less regularly the services. It is frequently the case that he cannot, as he thinks, attend the forenoon service on Sunday, because he is obliged to work.

He can attend dancing parties and balls if he wishes, and no objections are made. He goes to the theatre from time to time, as do also some of our pastors. He smokes and drinks wine of course. Almost all evangelical preachers do this in Italy and think total abstainers to be fools and fanatics. Wine with them takes the place of tea and coffee with us. The poorest members can find money enough for wine, tobacco, and an occasional visit to the theatre, but are too poor to contribute anything to help pay the expenses of the church.

We have said there were no class-meetings. This was true up to within a few years, but in several stations such a meeting is now maintained. In other stations they have the name without the thing. There was no such meeting in Florence during the first year of our stay except in the Theological School for the benefit specially of the students. For nearly two years one pastor tried to maintain such a meeting, but did not know how to conduct it or lacked the necessary enthusiasm. He never really sympathized with the Methodist idea of a class-meeting, reasoned that it was not adapted to Italy, and during the last year of our stay in Florence abandoned the effort altogether. The truth is there was not spirituality enough in the church to maintain a class-meeting, and the pastor did not know how to develop spirituality by means of it. The members could not tell their experience, because with few exceptions they had not experienced

salvation. The witness of the Spirit they knew nothing of experimentally and had rarely heard of it theoretically. Yet there were a score or so of devout members, constant in their attendance on the means of grace, who might have been organized into a praying, testifying company. A live church is a witnessing church. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A Methodist church without a class-meeting is a dead, cold thing. We did what we could by advice, exhortation and example to remedy this defect in our church, but lacking authority, our efforts were unsuccessful. We are told that at Rome there is a class-meeting when the superintendent is there, but during his absence in America it was abandoned. At Milan also the church is said to be organized into several classes and in some other stations a beginning has been made. Still it can hardly be expected of preachers who have not themselves been trained up in a class-meeting, that they will establish and well conduct one.

The prayer-meeting, so called, or by some other name, scarcely merits the title. During our stay in Florence we heard, at long intervals, six members of our church offer prayer. We except of course the Faculty and students of the Theological School. The prayer-meeting usually consisted of singing, reading of scripture, prayer by the pastor and remarks by the same. Sometimes the remarks were an exposition, sometimes a sermon. At the close some one

or two were occasionally called upon to offer prayer or say something. All this was in good old Presbyterian style, but it was not a Methodist prayer-meeting such as we have often attended in our German Mission, where all went down on their knees several times and a dozen men and women poured out their souls to God. Our pews in Italy are generally not made and arranged so that the people can kneel if they want to. That was not the style of service contemplated. Our preachers never kneel in the pulpit when they offer prayer, and rarely do so at a prayer-meeting. The women almost universally keep silent in the churches.

Italy has been called the land of song. One would naturally expect that the service of the Methodist Church in such a country would be characterized by hearty, joyful singing. Instead, the singing of nearly all our congregations is very slow and uninspired. They sometimes make considerable noise, but manifest no religious enthusiasm and gladness in singing. This is contrary to natural expectation, since the Italian is usually lively, and the quite common singing on the streets is of a joyful character. The explanation is that we have no Methodist hymns. The hymn book used in all our churches is that published under the direction of the Waldensian Church. Its theology inclines to Calvinism. Its spirit is too cold and unemotional for Methodism. It has no brisk melodies, and the few hymns that might be made to express something of life and power are sung

so slowly as to destroy their vitality. Some translations of Sankey's hymns have been made and are used to some extent in the Sunday-schools. Our German Mission, three years after its beginning, had its own Methodist hymn book. It has been improved till now it is full of Methodist spirit and doctrine, and our people in Germany and Switzerland sing as if they felt the sentiment of the songs. Our German song book for social service is much used by other denominations and even in the State churches. After over twenty years in Italy our church has no song book whatever. Various reasons may be assigned for this, but the principal one is that the mouth of our Italian Methodism has not been filled with singing. We have half a dozen or more poets in the Conference; at least they write verses, but their verses are often more literary and philosophical than devotional. A good religious hymn is the poetical outflow of a heart full of divine love, faith, and joy. One can write poetry or put abstract thought into the form of verse without spiritual qualities. A committee has for some time been appointed to publish a Methodist hymn book. How this can be done without any Methodist hymns it is difficult to understand. A committee to paint a picture, to carve a statue, or to write an epic would be equally sure of success in the undertaking. Hymn books, like poets, are born, not made. They may be compiled after the hymns have been written and sung and proved helpful to the

spiritual life and work of the church. Nothing better can be done for Italian Methodism just now than to secure the translation, by some poetic Christian, of the best hymns of Charles Wesley and other standard Methodist authors, together with some of our best revival melodies. Some movement was made in this direction by the publication of a fine translation of Charles Wesley's grand old hymn,

“Lord, I believe a rest remains,
To all thy people known.”

The translation was made by Rev. S. V. Ravi, who added some original hymns, and they were frequently sung in our services at Florence with very good effect. There is more religious joy expressed in his little melody,

“*Venite, gli inni del cuor
Alziamo al Re dei re,*”

sung to the tune, “We’re Marching to Zion,” than in any other hymn we heard sung in Italy. If hymns thus written were published with music in our paper, the *Evangelista*, from time to time, and introduced into our congregations, we could, after five years or more, make a beginning of a hymn book. At present our singing is of but little help to the spiritual growth of our members, and of but little if any attractive force to the unconverted.

The process by which our church at Florence dwindled down from a membership of two hundred to about half that number was as follows: In every

church many are attached to a popular pastor more than to Christ, and so fall off when the pastor is transferred. This is notably the case in Italy, where church ties are so loose. Many can see no reason for belonging to one denomination rather than to another except some present, personal and material advantage.

The pay of the Bible woman, whose heaviest act of service seems to have been to draw her monthly salary, was discontinued. As a consequence, she, with all her family and friends she could persuade, left our church and said all she could to injure it. This followed as the result of a rule without exception so far as we know. Whoever has once been in the pay of our mission as preacher, Bible woman, janitor, organist, etc., and has, for any cause, been discharged, has become at once a bitter opposer of our church, proving thereby that his motive for uniting with us was a mercenary one. One of the oldest and wealthiest members of the church took to himself a Catholic wife without legal marriage. This was thought to be contrary to our discipline, and being persistently reasoned with by the pastor, the brother got angry and withdrew. Some sympathizers followed his example. One official member assigned as a reason for his withdrawal the fact that the pastor preached a sermon in which he denied the doctrine of unconditional election. Another objected that the pastor taught the necessity of secret and family prayer. He, however, was persuaded of the error of

his ways, got converted and remained with us. Two other officials assigned in the Quarterly Conference, as a nominal reason for their withdrawal, the fact that there was published in our paper a translation without comment of Bishop Hamlin's experience of conversion and baptism by the spirit. They could not, they said, remain in a church that taught such fanaticism. Others objected that the new pastor sometimes knelt in prayer in the prayer-meetings, and several withdrew because a communion rail was introduced into the church. Up to 1888, there was scarcely an altar rail in any of our churches and no altar service. The Lord's Supper was received by the communicants standing, after the Waldensian style. It was thought at first by some that the introduction of a communion rail with invitation to kneel, if any one so wished, at the Lord's table, would utterly break up our churches. For some it bordered too closely upon the adoration of the host in the Roman Catholic Church. Some had such an antipathy to Roman Catholicism that they did not like to see in a Protestant Church anything that resembled the forms and ceremonies they had turned their backs upon. They forgot the scriptural injunction, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Of course they were not told that a part of the ritual service of our discipline is the same as that still used in the service of the mass, else they would have objected to that also. As one was in Italian and the other in Latin, perhaps the difference was sufficiently

great to suit the most fastidious. As to the posture of the body in the reception of the Lord's Supper, they were told that the laity in the Roman Catholic Church receive the wafer kneeling, the priests sitting, and the Pope alone standing, and so they must not insist upon the standing posture unless they wish to imitate his Holiness Leo XIII. The posture of the body is of little importance so long as there is no imposture, yet every denomination has its forms of worship and it is well to adhere to them. The objections of the vast majority were overcome, the communion rail is now seen in the most of our churches and, with few exceptions, our members now receive the sacrament kneeling.

Thus for various reasons our membership in Florence has been reduced to half what it once was, and ought still to be divided by two, cutting off the quotient and remainder. About fifty members may from time to time be seen at our church services. Common honesty, as well as the spiritual welfare of the churches, demands a thorough purging of the registers. We once asked the pastor of a certain church why he did not correct the records and report only actual members to be found. He replied that that would not please certain authorities. We asked the pastor of our church at Pontedera how many of his fifty-four members gave evidence of conversion. He counted them up on his fingers and replied, "Four or five." In this place and in Modena our membership

consists principally of Swiss who, having been trained up from infancy in the State Church of Switzerland and having removed to Italy, have entered our church by letter of transfer without, in the majority of cases, giving any evidence of conversion. We maintain a mission in Switzerland to convert these members of the National Church. It is therefore a little singular that they make acceptable Methodists in Italy without conversion. It should be added that though some of them are well to do financially they contribute next to nothing for the support of our church. They have not been accustomed to that way of supporting a church. It is really a financial gain for them to unite with our church in Italy. They get the service of the pastor gratuitously in case of baptism, sickness, death and marriage. Who has heard of a Methodist minister in Italy who ever received a marriage fee? The happy couple would sooner expect a present from him.

CHAPTER IV

STARTING A THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

AFTER seventeen years of experiment in Italy our Missionary Society became convinced of the necessity of training our own preachers, if we intend to establish Methodism in that land. In 1873 Rev. F. A. Spencer was sent to Italy and attempted to establish a school, but the next year was recalled because, as Dr. Reid says in his *Missions and Missionary Society of the M. E. Church*, “it became apparent to the Board and Bishop that a native ministry of truly Methodistic type could be formed, and that only faithful superintendence would, for some years to come, be required.” If this had only “become apparent” one year earlier, it would have saved much trouble and expense. It is singular that a feeble attempt of one year should have so wonderfully opened the eyes of the Board and Bishop. Perhaps the whole truth of that story has not yet been revealed to the public. With this slight exception the policy and practice from the first has been to choose our preachers mainly from two elements, viz., ex-priests and ex-Waldensians. There is a heterogeneous remainder that

comes from other denominations and is picked up at random. Not one of our preachers up to 1892 had been trained in a Methodist Episcopal Church, not to say in "one of our schools." The priesthood and other denominations have furnished us preachers. Not more than three of our preachers have been converted under the auspices of our Church. When we arrived in Italy the ex-priests numbered ten, and those who had been trained in Waldensian schools and churches, eight. Some changes have been made for the better, some for the worse, but the proportion remains about the same. On the whole all that we have gained by subtraction we have lost by addition. Our preachers are certainly not so able a body as that which existed six years ago, and many reasons convince us that they are not more pious and devoted to the upbuilding of Methodism. Within two years several of the best have left our ministry in Italy.

All our authorities became at last convinced that a Methodist church could not be established by means of such preachers. The experiment of utilizing ex-priests had been tried and had failed in Mexico and South America. One who had been a missionary of our church in Mexico thirteen years told us that it was found necessary to get rid of all the ex-priests and that only two of all that have been employed in the Mexican Mission have ever done our cause any good. Our German Mission has never employed an ex-priest or an ex-Lutheran preacher,

but has first converted and then trained its own preachers. This accounts largely for our great success in Germany and Switzerland. Some priests are ex necessarily. They have quarreled with their superiors, or been guilty of some immorality, or they want more salary or to get married. We received many letters from priests who wanted to leave the priesthood if they could be received into our school or conference. Usually they are careful to provide for future employment before their conscientious scruples force them out of the priesthood. There are thousands of young priests in Italy who would abandon the Roman Catholic Church if they could find desirable employment elsewhere. The men like Gavazzi, De Sanctis, and others who have come out from the Roman Catholic Church, sacrificing position, suffering persecution, not knowing whither they went, are few. There are some, however, and we honor such, but they do not make good Methodist preachers for the simple reason that they know nothing about Methodism, and when it is explained to them, they either do not understand it or they do not like it. But Methodism can not be explained or taught by definition. It is a living thing. It is learned by illustration, by contact. It must be caught like the measles. The only way to establish Methodism in Italy is to introduce it, to send over Methodists enough to make an impression on some persons or communities, and then it will spread of itself. Life is communicated from life.

We have seventeen Methodist missionaries in Catholic Mexico. For a long time we had only one in Italy and now we have but five. We recall the remark made by Bishop Mallalien when in Italy : "If I had my way, I would send over seventeen Methodist preachers at once."

The ex-priests, then, on the whole, have done us very little good and very much harm. Some have disgraced the ministry and returned to Roman Catholicism. It is very hard to erase the jesuitical marks of the priesthood. A character truly indeleble is stamped upon them. Once a priest always a priest, is a saying that holds good in general. The Italians say a priest has seven skins ; you must flay him seven times before you will find the new man. *Prete via prete fa prete.* There ought to be established in Italy a *ricovero* or industrial home for the priests, where they might learn a trade or fit themselves for some employment. The assumption that because they have studied Catholic theology they are already qualified for the evangelical ministry is one of the greatest blunders. In many cases they know almost nothing of the Bible. They know far more of the traditions of the Fathers and of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Moreover they are filled with the idea of priestly domination. They are the superiors of the people. They must be reverenced and obeyed by their flock. They stand on dignity too much and cannot condescend to mingle socially with laboring people. With them

religious service is too perfunctory. When they have held so many services weekly their work is done. They are prompt at all services such as they have been familiar with in the Roman Catholic Church, to visit the sick, watch over the dying, bury the dead, administer baptism and the eucharist, and solemnize marriages. They still attach great importance to external institutions, but the spiritual condition of their flock and the salvation of sinners give them little concern. It is worthy of notice that a man like Gavazzi, eloquent and magnetic, a born orator, who could hold a political audience of thousands and charm and persuade them by his magic utterance, could not gather a respectable number to hear him preach, and was, as a pastor, a failure. We wish this matter might be laid seriously to heart by our own and other Churches, that genuine Protestantism cannot be built up in Italy or elsewhere by means of ex-priests.

The Waldensian element of our Italian Conference consists of preachers who, for various reasons, could not obtain a pastorate in the Waldensian Church, or have not wished to accept such pastorate as was offered. Some have not been sufficiently educated in the schools of that Church. This element of our Conference is much superior to the one above mentioned. They have never disgraced our ministry by immoralities. They have, as a rule, more sympathy with the common people. They are more spiritual and less addicted to plots and scheming. Still they are simply Wal-

densians with the name Methodist, and while they may be very excellent Waldensians, they are, for the most part, very poor Methodists. They retain the spirit and forms of the mother Church, and, we think, still respect and love that Church more than our own, for which we cannot blame them. They have not been converted and trained up by our Church. They have simply been employed to serve us as best they can. We wish to cast no reflections upon the Waldensian Church as such. It has a history of which they are justly proud. They are doing a good work. The best men we met in Italy were the Waldensian pastors and professors in Florence. But the Methodist Episcopal Church is not in Italy for the purpose of establishing another Church just like the Waldensian. If that were true, it would be far better to give them our money and retire from the field. Thus far we have simply a poor and feeble imitation of Waldensianism, and any careful and candid observer can but prefer the original article.

Reasons similar to these may have convinced our authorities of the necessity of training up some Methodist preachers. Hence, we must have a Theological School, and some thought that it could be established at any moment without any preparation therefor. We are sorry to add that such counsels prevailed. Now, for a Theological School, two elements are absolutely necessary, professors and students, and the character of the school will depend upon the .

character of these two elements. Both need to be sought and prepared with equal care. Unexperienced and incompetent professors may make many blunders, and unconverted and immoral students may ruin the school. The writer of this, when he first arrived in Italy, urgently asked to be made a presiding elder for two years. This would give him opportunity to learn the language, study the situation and needs of our Church, and find students with whom to commence the school. Such a course seemed to be a temporary necessity. He urged in vain a delay in order to thorough preparation. The objection was made that such an appointment would defer the opening of the school. It is true that the school was an urgent necessity, still we needed to make haste slowly in this case. Proper preparation should have been made many years earlier, or the school should have been indefinitely postponed.

Our school for the training of native preachers opened January 1, 1889, ten months after our arrival in Italy. The Faculty consisted of the Presiding Elder as instructor in Pastoral Theology, Homiletics, and Ecclesiastical History. He had also the duties of treasurer of the Mission, with a large correspondence. He was necessarily absent from the school a large part of the time. A young ex-priest, just received on trial in the conference, and assistant pastor of the church in Florence, gave some instruction in the Italian language and literature, and as for ourselves,

we could do nothing else than teach English. It was wisely thought that the students should learn this language in order to give them access to Protestant literature in general and to Methodist literature in particular, since there is very little of either published in Italian. As we conducted the correspondence of the school, we were addressed as *Direttore*, and the title stuck to us in succeeding Conference appointments. However, during the first year we had little to do with choosing the students or directing the affairs of the school, not yet knowing the language sufficiently.

A house consisting of three floors was rented at No. 24 Via Lorenzo il Magnifico, Florence. The school was on the ground floor, and the professors lived above. It became known throughout the Conference that a Theological School was to be established, and applications for admission fairly poured in. Sixty-five applicants wrote to us in the course of three years. There is no difficulty as to quantity or number of students. We could have a dozen Theological Schools in Italy if we were not too particular as to the quality of persons admitted and the Missionary Society would pay all their expenses. The principal attraction of the school was its gratuitousness. It is hard for young men in Italy to find employment. Many of these had just as lief preach as not, if they are well paid for it, and when to the prospect of a lucrative position in the near future is

added the inducement of entire support during the three years of preparation, the Theological School becomes an Eldorado to many an impecunious young man in America as well as in Italy. It is to be feared that the increase of pecuniary aid to theological students in America is injuring the quality of candidates for the ministry. Certain religious journals have been lamenting that men of inferior abilities and too little piety are seeking admission to our Theological Schools and pastorates. Is not the cause of this to be found in the too great financial aids and inducements held out? Poor young men do succeed in fitting themselves for the practice of law and of medicine without the assistance of educational societies, and by so doing develop pluck and perseverance enough to make themselves worth something in their profession. A young man called of God can work his own way through a Theological School in most cases. There is such a thing as helping him to death. It is a dangerous thing to *give* money to a young, able-bodied man. It develops a selfish and dependent spirit, and the offer of financial inducements attracts such persons. Our educational societies have done wisely to change the old policy, and they no longer *give* aid to students, but *loan* small sums on easy terms. We have been told by the Superintendent of our South American Mission that all the theological students are required to give notes for all the money expended on their education and to pay the same after some years of service in the

ministry. We are not yet fully convinced that this plan would do for Italy at present. Doubtless plenty of young men could be found ready to give their note for any sum, the greater the better, but the collection of the same might occasion some inconvenience.

However, we had to have students in order to start a school, and as none rich and unselfish enough to pay their own expenses offered themselves, we had to hold out inducements. All who wrote told the same story. They were absolutely penniless. Only one of all the sixty-five felt able to do so much as clothe himself. The rest wanted board, clothes, books, lights, fuel, washing, tuition, and even railroad expenses. Indeed all their needs and wants must be satisfied by the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that is generally supposed in Italy to possess immense wealth and to be another Propaganda similar to that of Rome. Some with family asked to be supplied with a furnished house outside the school and a salary of 300 francs per month. More than one wanted to know if he could be assigned to a pastorate after remaining a year in the school. At first, money to pay traveling expenses to Florence was sent to accepted candidates. Enough was sent to purchase a second-class ticket, since it was considered a humiliation for a minister, even *in embryo*, to ride third-class. The result was that the hopeful candidates bought third-class tickets and put the balance in their pockets,

and soon one to whom we had sent money for railroad fare, failed either to appear or to refund the money. After this we concluded that if we could not find young men in Italy of pluck and devotion enough to get to Florence without pecuniary aid, we had better not have any Theological School. The candidates continued to ask for traveling expenses, but when refused they found no insuperable obstacle in their way.

For six months the experiment was tried of granting to the students an allowance of fifty francs each per month and letting them provide for themselves. They had their boarding club in the basement of the building. A man and wife of middle age served as janitor and cook, and she was in some sense a mother to the students. In fact she wanted to be too motherly. She soon arranged a correspondence and exchange of photographs between one young fellow and her daughter in Rome. Then the daughter resigned her position as teacher at Rome and came to Florence. Then the young man was utterly distracted, could no longer study or obey the rules of the school, manifested much deceitfulness and untruthfulness, and finally got insolent and angry and had to be ejected from the school. Ere this the janitor and wife had departed. He had a way of getting drunk that we did not quite like. She was constantly complaining against the students, and they were dissatisfied with her. The food was not sufficiently good nor abundant

to suit anybody. The talk and manners at the table were not edifying. After six months the boarding club was discontinued, and for a year all the students sat at my table and shared the same food with my family; still they were not happy, as we shall see further on.

It might be interesting to know more particularly the *personnel* of that first class in the school in order to get a little insight into Italian character. The first young man admitted, as we afterward learned, had been expelled from a Roman Catholic seminary for vagabondage. He professed conversion and united with our church at Turin. He was warmly recommended by the pastor and had been employed by the Presiding Elder about a year as assistant pastor at Milan and elsewhere. At Milan he was also President of the Young Men's Christian Association and is said to have left the city with some of the funds of that society in his pocket. How the heart sunk at the first sight of him! Fraud was written all over his countenance. He was about the plainest specimen of a rascal that we ever had anything to do with. He could pray and exhort with what passes for "unction" with some. The tone was well rounded but hollow. The words were fluent and abundant but empty. Dr. Buckley happened to visit us at that time, and at almost first glance he said, "You had better get rid of that young man." We had already come to be of his opinion. We dismissed him after

six weeks of trial. By cheating and borrowing from other students he succeeded in taking away with him about one hundred francs. Lying and swearing were his daily pastime. We gave him money enough to pay his fare to Turin and accompanied him to the train. In a few days he turned up again in Florence, dressed in new clothes, and one night shortly after in a state of intoxication saluted us on the street. He went back to the Roman Catholic Church, and after a year or so was again expelled. Then he had the impudence to come and beg at our door, and under the plea of a persecuted Evangelical he solicited money from all the pastors in the city. This is a common trick. Lots of mendicants go about Italy with a certificate in their pocket that they belong to some evangelical church. Some such beggars have called upon us, wearing kid gloves and cane. It is an exceedingly poor young man in Italy who can not afford these luxuries.

The next to come and go was a young Austrian, a music teacher from Bologna, where he had played the organ in our church for some time. He was recommended by the pastor and wife as "*tanto buono*," *so good*. He had wasted his substance and well-nigh his body in riotous living. He looked half starved. He could wear quite a meek and devout look and could almost cry at will. But he would lie and break the rules of the school. He had to be dismissed for general worthlessness. After seeking employment

some months in Florence and Milan he was arrested for vagrancy, escorted across the frontier into Austria, and told not to return to Italy. He then wrote us that if we did not send him at once five hundred francs, he would throw such a bomb into the Methodist camp as would utterly ruin our school and Church in Italy. The dynamite was to be in the shape of a newspaper article. After two weeks another letter of similar import arrived. Since then we have not heard from him.

The third was a young student from Naples who came to us with a tale of persecution on the part of his family because he had become a Protestant. His father had taken from him all his books and nearly all his clothing, so that he was in a quite destitute state. We took pity on him and bought him a new suit of clothes, whereat his humility vanished. He loved to put on that suit, leave one corner of the handkerchief sticking out of the breast pocket, and sally forth to meet his lady love, whose acquaintance he made during his four or five weeks of stay with us. One day other students told us that he was stealing books from the school library to sell at the second-hand bookstore. One night he missed that suit of clothes from his room and came up much excited and demanded it. He was told to take what he had and start for Naples the next morning. He declared at first with much bluster that he would kill everybody in the house, if that suit were not imme-

diately given back to him. Failing in this mode of persuasion, he shed forth quite an effusion of crocodile tears and said, "How can I disgrace myself and family by returning home in these old clothes?" A year later he wrote asking to be re-admitted to the school, promising to be very good and study hard. We think he was still cherishing the hope of recovering that suit of clothes.

Number four had been a student in the school of the Free Church at Rome, and was dismissed because of impertinence, disobedience, and general unreliability. He was recommended by one of our pastors on the score of personal friendship. The Presiding Elder had heard him preach and was quite captivated by his readiness of utterance and apparent earnestness. So the testimony of a most respectable authority in the Free Church was set aside as a prejudiced statement and, in opposition to our expressed wishes, he was received into our school. He proved himself to be untrustworthy, broke his promises repeatedly, and finally was suspended in hope that the discipline of earning his own living for a while might reform him. To the surprise of the Faculty of the school, he was at once employed as a teacher and assistant pastor in our church. Subsequently two or three other cases under discipline were treated in a similar way. After six months he entered the army, leaving several debts behind him. Here he continued his habit of borrowing money on any pretext without any intention or

possibility of repaying. He, too, had become engaged, but when the *fidanzata* refused to send him thirty francs, the engagement was broken.

The next was the son of a Wesleyan preacher. His father was determined to make a minister of him, though the son had no ability or desire to preach. He was twenty-five years old, had never tried to preach, but supposed that after passing through a Theological School it would be very easy to do so. He could not learn if he would, and he would not study any how. Frequently his head ached till the lessons of the day were over, when he would arise from bed, eat heartily, and go out for a walk. We had to send him away. How his fond father plead with us to make a minister of his boy! He even went so far as to offer to pay his expenses in the school. It was of no use. The youth lacked gifts, grace, and usefulness. We could not evolve what had not been involved.

The sixth, as we afterward learned, had been dismissed from the Theological School in Geneva, as unworthy of the ministry. General worthlessness seemed to be his complaint, with a marked tendency to deceitfulness. We became convinced that he lacked energy and religious character, and after two months we had to advise him to leave. His father seems to have given him up as a hopeless case. The young man enlisted in the army for lack of something better to do.

The seventh we have already alluded to as the young man of nineteen summers who preferred to give up the ministry rather than break off secret associations with a pretty girl and attend to his studies. He married, struggled with poverty several years, tried to find employment with other denominations as colporteur, and at last account was employed as preacher in charge of our church in a large city. We presume this was an act of charity (toward him, not toward the church). To find a place for impecunious young men seems to be a part of the policy of the administration. This is all very well so long as unsuitable persons are not put into the ministry.

The eighth was with us about a year and then was called prematurely into the ministry. His heart was impulsively good, but he lacked stability of character. He was a poor scholar and could say all he knew in a very few noisy sermons. As a colporteur he might be very successful. He can never be a leader of men, nor has he the wisdom and ability to be a preacher in charge.

The ninth student of the first year's class finished his course of study and is at present the sole graduate of our school, though six who were for a shorter or longer time students with us are now trying to preach. Whether our labors with these have been spent in vain the future will determine.

Thus were spent about \$4,000 in trying to develop preachers out of young men who had given no evidence

whatever that they were called of God to the ministry. We disclaim all responsibility for this. Our advice to postpone the opening of the school was rejected. Several students were admitted against our protest. We had not had opportunity to study the Italian language and character. We simply obeyed the wishes of superiors in office, protesting as mildly as was possible. It was argued that we must have a certain number of students in order to make a respectable report to the church in America, and we must take such material as was available. We were trying to raise a ministry on the hot-house principle, by forced growth. In subsequent years we used more caution in the selection of candidates, though every year one or two had to be dismissed after trial as worthless and hopeless. Still false principles were at the foundation of our work and vitiated all results, as we shall show in a subsequent chapter. After all that has been said, it was better to experiment with these young men in the school than in the Conference, and it would have been wiser still not to have experimented at all with the most of them.

The proper method to have pursued has already been hinted at. It finds an illustration in the history of our German Mission. At first, Dr. Nippert, one of the founders of the Mission, took two or three young men into his home and gave them some instruction and more practice. They had previously given evidence of their conversion and call to the ministry.

The number of students slowly increased till, after forty years, we have at Frankfort-on-the-Main a Theological School of twenty-seven students. All these have been required to serve as assistant preachers on a large circuit before being admitted to the school. The salary for the year before entering the school and for at least two years after leaving it, is \$125 per annum. The students are men and not boys, consecrated servants of the Lord, and not hirelings. The financial system is such as to develop the spirit of self-sacrifice, while in Italy it is such as to destroy it, if it had previously existed. The board of the students in the school and half the salaries of the professors are paid by voluntary contributions made in the churches of our German and Swiss Conferences.

CHAPTER V

CONFERENCE AT MILAN

AFTER trying for some years, with poor success, to gather a congregation and found a Church in a little out-of-the-way room in Milan, it was decided to build a church. It cost, including land, about \$30,000, and is good so far as it goes, but is not half big enough. There are seats for one hundred and fifty persons, and with chairs two hundred can be accommodated. Now such a Church can never become self-supporting in a large city. If it were composed of families of average wealth, the contributions would not be enough to support the pastor and pay current expenses. But in Italy our members are poor, and the most that this church full at Milan can now do is to pay its current expenses. The pastor's salary and traveling and moving expenses are paid by the Missionary Society. It is a great mistake to build a little church in a great city. It takes a crowd to draw a crowd. We have not a church in Italy half large enough, and many of our services are held in little seven-by-nine rooms, where only a handful of hearers can be accommodated. It is true that the church and

the room are generally less than half full, but this is usually the fault of the preacher, or of his predecessor.

The church at Milan was dedicated during the week of the Conference. Both Church and Conference were novelties in that city, and so the passing crowd dropped in to hear the services. Every evening as many were present as could be packed in. It was a splendid opportunity to inaugurate a new dispensation, and an attempt was made. The Italian Conference had never seen an altar service. To invite sinners to come forward or to arise for prayer was a strange and revolutionary thing. At Florence, a few months before, Bishop Mallalieu had invited the Church to a service of consecration at the altar with good results. To him, we think, is due the honor of holding the first altar service in Italy. Such services have occasionally been held in Florence since.

The first night of the Conference the Presiding Elder exhorted well after the sermon, and to the surprise of nearly all ten men came forward and kneeled at the altar. One or two of the youngest seemed to have but little realization of the significance of the act, but the majority were serious and wanted instruction and spiritual help. One was an old man of sixty years. We prayed and talked with them, and urged them to seek the witness of the Spirit. But the most of the members of the Italian Conference were scandalized, and one declared that if that service

were repeated the following night he would leave the Church. The next night sinners were asked simply to rise for prayer, and thirteen arose. The next night no invitation was given at all. We have seen no altar service at any Conference since. "This won't do in Italy," they said. "Your American ways of doing can't be introduced here." This is their constant cry. Anything that they have not known from childhood is an innovation and must be disastrous. Methods that have proved successful in almost every part of the world will not do for Italy. The Italians are a peculiar people, you know, and we must not run against their prejudices. If we try to introduce methods successful elsewhere, then the cry is raised that we are trying to Americanize the Italians. All this is only the expression of unbelief and lack of earnestness in the salvation of sinners. He who grumbles about methods of doing a thing usually does not want the thing done any how. If he did, he would try all possible methods, and then repeat the one that was successful. What we need in Italy is backbone and faith enough to press the use of methods that have proved so successful elsewhere, whether the preachers like them or not, and if they will not learn and adopt the methods of Methodism, or invent better ones, let them leave us and go their way. Instead of our preachers in Italy being directed, they have gradually and perhaps unconsciously been allowed to direct the Americans sent over to superintend them.

That experience at Milan has often come to mind. The Lord honored our little faith, and set before us an open door to success. We ought to have seen one hundred souls converted during that Conference week. By making everything else subordinate to that one issue it could have been done, and such a revival would have revolutionized our work in Italy. Our preachers have no idea of a revival. Such a thing has not been known in Italy. They have the word *risveglio*, which more properly means awakening. The religious papers often speak of such awakenings here and there, but they usually mean nothing more than an increased attendance at the services of the church. It does not mean that anybody has been converted, though perhaps a few have given their names to the pastors and been enrolled as probationers. A genuine Methodist revival by the power of the Holy Ghost convicting of sin and leading to immediate repentance, faith, and the witness of the Spirit, would be greeted by most Protestants in Italy as the rankest fanaticism. Nothing of the kind is known in our churches. Nobody seems to be looking for immediate results. Let the husbandman sow the seed and God will give the harvest in His good time. They do not see that the fields are already white unto the harvest. At this age of the world God wants harvesters even more than seed-sowers.

The minutes of the Conference, this year published for the first time, record some changes. One had

died, and it was judged best not to hold any memorial service or publish any obituary in the Minutes. This silence speaks louder than words. One was located at his own request. He had for years taught in the government schools, and received also a larger salary than any other unmarried man in the Conference as assistant pastor. The only assistance he gave was to preach once on the Sabbath. For this he received \$720 per year. In withdrawing from the Conference he asked for a bonus of three months' salary, which was not granted. Some one, in irony, moved that a collection be taken for him. The motion did not suit the tastes of certain ones. He is still teaching in the public schools and never attends our church services. Another withdrew from our ministry and Church. He had been sent to Palermo, a new charge. A church that had been Presbyterian offered itself to us for support. They had a hall with furnishings, and our preacher went to them, carrying with him nothing but a Bible for the pulpit. He did not correspond to their notions of what a Methodist preacher should be, and we can but admire their good judgment. After two months a large majority of the members of the church waited upon him in person and gave him the Bible, saying in substance: "You brought nothing else to us. We wish for your services no longer. Take this and go. We have had enough of the Methodist Church." The preacher at once telegraphed to the Presiding Elder his withdrawal, assigning as a

reason that he could not work in harmony with the new administration. The people felt about the same way, only their conclusion was to dismiss the administrator. This preacher, too, asked for a bonus of three months' salary.

Another located, and as he had been a preacher with us for fourteen years, he asked for a bonus of six months' salary, *i.e.*, \$480. He had already made arrangements to return to the Waldensian Church as pastor, and, in fact, directly after the session of Conference, withdrew from our Church, taking with him to the Waldensian fold nearly our entire congregation at Rome. Our church at Piazza Poli, Rome, has been in a sickly condition ever since, and this is why the location is said to be unfavorable and the property has been sold. Some blamed the preacher for his act, which had the appearance of treachery, but long reflection has convinced us that he did what any other preacher in Italy would naturally have done under similar circumstances. He had become thoroughly convinced of the inability of our Mission to accomplish the work needed, and so could not be expected to urgently advise his congregation to remain in the Methodist fold. In former years he had brought over a Wesleyan flock to us in Florence, and this was duly tabulated as an indication of the progress of our Mission in Italy. Now, with changed convictions, was it not equally his duty to transfer his congregation to the Church he was about

to join? Let us be charitable in our judgment. He was, on the whole, the ablest minister of the Conference.

One preacher on trial was not received into full connection as he had hoped to be. He, therefore, sent his withdrawal to the Presiding Elder and left the city in disgust. A few evenings after some one in the theatre at Venice heard him berating the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Presiding Elder did not report his withdrawal to the Conference, soon had an interview with him and persuaded him to continue in our ministry. He kept a horse and hunting dog and once, during the previous year, had gone off on a pleasure trip without permission, leaving his pulpit unsupplied for two Sundays. We learn that about three years later he sent his withdrawal the second time to the Presiding Elder because objection was made to paying the rent of two houses for him at the same time. Again he was persuaded to remain. We have it on the best of authority that he took his Missionary collection in the following manner: Some members of the Church were invited to the parsonage to spend the evening socially. The game was dominoes and the stakes were but small. All the gains were set aside for the benefit of missions. The Missionary collection on his charge was the largest ever known in its history, 153 francs, more than the sum collected for self-support.

We have to chronicle one more withdrawal at this same Conference at Milan. He had been for six

years the editor of the *Nuova Scienza*, sometimes called the Italian Methodist Quarterly Review. He received his salary from the Missionary Society, and the funds for printing the magazine came from the Tract Society of our Church. There was nothing on the title page or in the contents to show that it was an organ of Methodism. It had no readers in our Church except a few preachers. It aimed to be philosophical rather than religious, and its philosophy was declared by several members of the Conference to be pantheistic. The editor himself, in a published letter, accepted the compliment of being the best recent exponent of Giordano Bruno. The *Nuova Scienza* had not the remotest connection with any work of Methodism in Italy, yet the editor was shrewd enough to draw his support from the Methodist Episcopal Church. He wanted to be continued indefinitely as the editor of that Review and just before Conference wrote to us, saying he had a large library and he intended to leave it in his will to our Theological School, if he were allowed to remain in his editorial chair. That offer was more transparent than most Italian wiles. The Presiding Bishop decided to discontinue the Review and so had to assign to the editor a station. Melfi was suggested, a little village where we had no church to ruin, and so he could do no harm if he went there, which was not at all expected. The result proved that we had rightly estimated his devotion to Methodism. After a couple months spent in correspondence with the Presiding Elder, during

which he continued to draw his salary and put in exorbitant claims for moving expenses, failing to fully accomplish his purpose, he sent in a very saucy letter of withdrawal from the ministry. He still continues to publish the *Nuova Scienza*, but not at the expense of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

During the previous eight months the experiment had been tried of having an Italian Presiding Elder. He was a good man, conscientious, kind, intellectually able, but, as some thought, poetically visionary, and impractical. In his report he recommended, among other similar things, the establishment by the Mission of an Agricultural Colony, where the Italians might be taught improved methods of agriculture. Some laughed, but why not laugh also at our Industrial Schools at Atlanta! This brother has recently withdrawn from our ministry, hoping to translate his pet scheme into fact. Who knows but that he may have quite as good success as our Mission has thus far had! He was not, however, thought to be a success as Presiding Elder, and to prevent the appointment of three Italian Presiding Elders no better than he, we proposed to the Bishop, after agreeable consultation, to put the entire Conference into the hands of one American Presiding Elder, thus returning to the old system. It is a grave mistake to have but one Presiding Elder in any Mission or Conference, but nothing better could be done at that time. Our proposition was gladly accepted. We would have proposed three American Presiding Elders had they been available.

They are sadly needed in order to supply an adequate supervision of the Mission, and by frequent and prolonged visits to infuse into our pastors and members an evangelistic spirit and teach them revival methods. For our well-meant advice in this matter we afterwards received quite the reverse of thanks from all parties concerned.

On the Sabbath the Bishop was too sick to preach. The Presiding Elder preached in the afternoon from the text, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Considering the fact that he had been in Italy only three years he used the language remarkably well, and the theme was certainly one to awaken great interest. Half the members of the Conference showed their sympathy by staying away from the service, and half the audience went out during the delivery of the sermon. At the close an Italian brother offered prayer in his earnest, energetic style. The clear flow of mellifluous Italian was heard in the street. Passers-by were arrested and turned into the church. At the close of his prayer the church was full. This illustrates the difference between the preaching of a native and of a foreigner. A foreigner cannot draw and hold an audience in Italy any better than in America. We venture to say that not one foreigner out of hundreds could begin the study of English after thirty years of age, and succeed as pastor of a church in New England. His thought would always be comparatively broken and his language lame. In any country people will go in large

numbers once or twice partly from curiosity to hear an address from the lips of one who speaks their language poorly and with a foreign accent. In pagan countries and among ignorant populations, where the niceties of language are not cultivated or known, the foreigner may often speak as correctly as the common people, and his thought is vastly superior to what they are accustomed to hear. In such cases missionaries from America may succeed as evangelists and pastors. But in all our Missions the well-trained native preachers are the most successful. We knew several English-speaking persons who, after from ten to twenty-five years of residence in Italy, have failed to attract audiences of any considerable number. This principle ought to be kept in mind in the selection of men for Italy. It would be well before sending a missionary to Italy to consider what he is going to do there. The Mission does not need American pastors, but only those who shall superintend the work. It is folly to send to Italy a man to be Presiding Elder, Professor in a Theological School; or Editor, who never would be thought of for a corresponding position in America. If any suppose the Italians are raw heathen and that almost anybody will do for a missionary to them, such persons are greatly mistaken. Our work in Italy demands half a dozen at least of the best men that Methodism can furnish, and they should not be too young, or without experience in the ministry.

CHAPTER VI

VISITATION OF THE CHURCHES

Most of our Bishops who visit the European Conferences are not content with seeing the natural scenery and picture galleries that are found along their lines of travel, but also begin or end their tour by a trip to Greece, Constantinople, Palestine, and Egypt. This is all as it should be, but when one of them said that the hardest criticism he heard in America of missionaries was, that they took so much time for vacations, we thought the criticism in its repetition was hard indeed. It sometimes happens that those who have the most time to rest think themselves overburdened with toil while others are loafing. A trip over the Alps to visit a station officially is ministerial labor and one of the hardships of the itinerancy; to walk over the same Alps after nine months of sitting at a desk, studying, writing, and teaching, is a waste of opportunity and merits reproof. We spent our first two summers in Florence, studying the language, editing a paper, and preparing lectures. This was against the advice of all friends, for scarcely any English-speaking people remain in Italy during

the hot weather, except they go to the mountains or the sea-shore. During our second year in Italy we edited a monthly Italian paper of eight pages, writing one-quarter of the same, translated and wrote tracts, including Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, to the extent of several hundred pages of printed matter, gave five lectures a week in Systematic Theology, all of which had to be written out in Italian, and taught something of English, Greek Testament, and Church History in the Theological School. At the end of the year we found ourselves so reduced in health, so nervous and tired, that a change of climate was absolutely necessary. The Bishop referred to would say: "Why didn't you go out and evangelize during the vacation?" We reply, that demands, first of all, a good command of the language; second, it requires authorization of the Presiding Elder and permission of the preacher in charge, if the evangelization is to be done in our churches; third, if evangelization be attempted in the open air, as in India and many other countries, the evangelist would shortly find himself in prison. No one can speak to a company in the streets or fields on any subject without special permission from the civil authorities. If a person have a license as colporteur, he may say enough to advertise his wares, and, armed with this authority, some do visit from house to house and really do much preaching publicly. In this way much good may be done, but it is ques-

tionable whether foreigners would be permitted to do such work or could do it successfully if permitted. At least we do not know that it has ever been tried. Go out and evangelize! Yes, but there is a limit to human strength and to human opportunities. Come ye apart into the mountains and rest awhile. Even missionaries have frail bodies and cannot work all the time. In this respect they are just like Bishops and General Secretaries. During our four and a half years in Italy we spent as a vacation scarcely three months, climbing over the Alps, visiting our stations in Italy, and seeing the work of the Swiss and German Conferences. It was not time spent in vain even from the Missionary point of view. We saw and heard many things that gave us a better acquaintance with our work in Italy and better ideals of what that work should be. Would you like to accompany us on such a trip? We will go unheralded and look in upon our churches unexpectedly. Thus we may see some things not generally seen by visiting officials.

We will start out from Florence and go over the Appenines by *diligence* either to Forli or to Faenza. The latter route we made in August, 1891. The former we traveled in the reverse direction with Bishop Mallalieu in October, 1888. We cannot stop now to describe the mountain scenery, the delightful conversation with the Bishop, the enormous quantities of luscious grapes eaten on the way, and the various

incidents of a memorable day's travel. On our way to Forli we stop a few minutes at Dovadola and look into our hired house. A room on the ground floor serves as our church. Perhaps fifty persons might be crowded into it with considerable discomfort, but this is not necessary. The medium congregation reported in the Minutes of 1888 and 1889 was 18 and 20. The village has a population of several thousands, and ours is the only evangelical church in it. We have been told that the nucleus of our church formerly belonged to the Plymouth Brethren. This little church has had a troubrous history since it became Methodist. The thrice ex-priest, Palmieri, had charge here and at Forli for two years and left such a bad impression of Protestantism as was only excelled by the impression made by a successor two years later. An unknown person was picked up as a supply without any proof of his fitness except that a certain pastor had recommended him as a good fellow out of employment. He spent one year at Venosa and nearly ruined everything there. His memory survives only in the minds of his creditors. Then he was transferred to Dovadola. What a change one year in our ministry had wrought in his personal appearance. His face had changed from pale to red, and his once lean body had grown portly and bloated. He borrowed money of every person he could and bought goods on credit. On complaint of his church members a deputy was sent by the Presiding Elder to dispatch him, *i. e.*,

to tell him that his services were no longer wanted in the Methodist Episcopal Church. But his creditors began to see that if he left, their hope of recovering the money loaned him would take wings and fly away with him. So they began to plead for his stay and to threaten secession from Methodism. The deputy was firm, however, and the pastor not long after departed. A Waldensian teacher was then received into our Church and sent to Dovadola as a supply. He told us that at his first service the audience consisted of the janitor alone. The Methodist Church had been boycotted, and all the members declared that they would not set foot into our church again till the debts of the former pastor had been paid. The janitor, it seems, had not conscientious regard enough for the honor of our Church to induce him to resign a salaried position.

“ Among the faithless, faithful only he.”

They argued that the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church had knowingly sent them a pastor unworthy of confidence, that they had received him in good faith and trusted him with money to meet emergent needs, and that the Missionary Society was responsible morally and financially for their loss. The argument is not without force, but it put the treasurer of the Mission in a bad dilemma. He must either lose an entire church from the statistical rolls or admit the principle that he as treasurer is responsible for the debts of all our insolvent preach-

ers. We remember arguing the case with him. He said, "The Missionary Society sends us money to do good with, and if we can do good by paying these debts and so save our church, we ought to do it." We could not quite admit the principle in that form. The Missionary Society appropriates every dollar to some specific purpose, to do a certain kind of good, and we have no right to use the money of the Church to pay private debts. However, some money was raised by private subscription, and a compromise was made with the creditors. They agreed to return to our Church on receiving seventy cents on a dollar, which was paid. The debts amounted to about a thousand francs. The ex-pastor went to Rome and was soon in the employment of another denomination. But the stage is waiting. Let us leave Dovadola, "nor cast one longing, lingering look behind."

Forli has suffered from the same unworthy pastors and from others well-meaning but incompetent. The only evangelical church in a city of 40,000 inhabitants, it has dragged along for years with an average attendance reported in the Minutes of 14, 25, and 40, and such statistics are nearly always exaggerated. Some difficulties between the pastor and the people have arisen, due to a lack of tact and good sense on the part of the former. Such difficulties are usually set down to the charge of Catholic bigotry and persecution, and the indiscreet preacher may figure for a while as a live martyr. The Catholics do not trouble

us at all. We are not doing enough to provoke their opposition. Protestantism is now as undisturbed in Italy as in America. Occasionally a stone came through our church window at Florence. It was thrown by some rowdyish boy in the street, and not by any Catholic assailants. It has a certain effect in American papers to attribute such disturbances to Catholic hatred. We have more to fear in Italy from indifference than from opposition. We have not shown zeal enough to make sinners mad.

We look in at our little church at Faenza, where we have been "struggling" more than a dozen years, if that word may properly describe the do-nothing habit of some of our pastors. Over the entrance to a room of about 12x25 feet in dimensions is still written, *Chiesa Cristiana*. We commend authorities if they are ashamed to advertise this as a Methodist Church. The Minutes report here an average attendance of twenty-five, but we learn from more than one reliable source that for three years the audience was oftener *three* than twenty-five. Meanwhile the five hundred priests of that city laugh at us and leave us undisturbed.

We pass by Bologna, already sufficiently described, and go on to Venice. Work was begun here in 1876, and probably over \$20,000 have here been spent. We have no church property. A fine house is rented for \$300 per annum, and a large room in it is used as a hall of evangelization. A recent pastor told us he

found 150 names on the church register, but had seen only two of them in church. The Minutes of 1893 report fourteen members and two probationers. The congregation varies from five to twenty-five. When the Presiding Elder was to make his quarterly visit the pastor used to ask the minister of another denomination to send his congregation up to our service so as to make the Presiding Elder think that we have a large audience in Venice. We told this to one of our preachers in the Conference. "Oh!" said he, "there are two or three other pastors that do that way." However, that is not quite up to the trick of another pastor. He went out into the streets and *café* and hired an audience for a cent apiece. "Go ye out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be full." Only a house filled three or four times a year in that manner is no fair indication of the prosperity of the station. Our Bishops of course always find crowded houses. There is a curiosity about seeing a live Protestant American Bishop. Let them drop down upon our churches without escort and unknown if they want to know what is being done in Italy. For five years we have had in Venice a fine location and a nice parsonage. What more could be wished by a preacher of easily contented spirit, unless it were an increase of salary? The preacher in charge is a young man who had to be expelled from the Theological School. We do not dare to prophesy any improvement under his ministry.

We pass on to Milan, where it is so refreshing to be able to record some signs of prosperity. The church is quite well filled according to all reports. The membership and collections are increasing. There are five classes. This prosperity is due to the new church, to the more liberal spirit of the Milanese, but more than all to the good sense, piety, and activity of the pastor, Felice Dardi, and of his present assistant, Augusto Manini. The Day and the Evening Schools also serve to increase the congregations. Brother Dardi has been here five years. His first three assistants were great hindrances. The first of these was an ex-priest, who had to be discharged after three months. He could neither preach nor pray; used to write out a prayer and read it at the public service. The second was a suspended theological student, who did much harm. The third was a typical character that is constantly seeking entrance into the ranks of the ministry. He told us a thrilling story of his conversion while leaning on the tomb of General Gordon in Westminster Abbey. He at once decided to abandon journalism and devote himself to the evangelization of Italy. He told others he had been a lawyer and a Professor of Latin and Greek. He did us much damage for four months; then by falsehood and by recommendations unwisely given to him he got into the Waldensian Theological School as a student, having been refused admission to ours. Here he remained but a short time. Being

solicited by a creditor for money, he drew a *stiletto*. For this and for embezzlement of the funds of a society he was sentenced to prison for eighteen months. The present assistant at Milan, Sig. Manini, has served as a "supply" for several years. He lacks education but has zeal and piety, and so does better work than all the philosophers of the Conference. Philosophy is the Italian's forte. All who can scribble write philosophy, or think they can.

We come next to Turin. This was a station of the *Chiesa Libera*, maintained largely by English Presbyterians until 1880, when the pastor got disaffected and came with nearly all his church members into the Methodist fold. The explanation is given in the report of the Free Italian Church for 1880, as follows :

"For several years Signor Bracchetto has caused great uneasiness to the Free Church in regard to many things, doctrinal teaching, guidance of Church in discipline, etc., management of Mission, and so on. These things were for a long time charitably put down to imprudence and thoughtlessness. But it began to be felt that Signor Bracchetto really was conscious of how much, and how far, he was constantly compromising his Church and Committee and the honor of Christ. In June last, he was officially informed, that at the October Meeting of the General Assembly he would be charged with disloyalty to Gospel interests, and the heads of accusation were indicated, in order that he might be fully prepared for his defence, if he had any to offer. Later on the society in England which supported him, through us, withdrew that support, because of the general unsatisfactoriness of his work. When October came, Signor Bracchetto did not appear at the Assembly, nor was the Turin Church represented. Nothing

could be done in his absence beyond a statement of what would have been entered on, if he had appeared. But his conduct was considered a slight, and the Treasurer refused to have any correspondence with him. All his constant demands for schools, locales, and evangelists have been repeatedly declined by the Committee, which had neither the money nor the desire to spend more on the Turin Mission. We now hear that since the Assembly in October Signor Bracchetto has been busy seeking to enter another Church, without the cognizance of his Committee, and that he has joined the Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.”—Page 28.

The action of the pastor cannot be considered as anything better than a treacherous secession. He reported 97 members and 125 hearers, and our annual statistical report was increased by so much. His successor at Turin reported 40 members and 30 hearers. The aforesaid Bracchetto has been a failure as a Methodist preacher.

The Missionary Society has bought at Turin, for \$30,000, a house with four or five apartments. The preacher has the best one, and the rest are rented. The services are held in a room back of an inner court. To build a suitable church here will require \$10,000 or more, and then it will be hidden out of sight by the apartments in front and unfavorably located. The present pastor seems to be a good and inefficient man, trained in the Waldensian Schools. The audience is small and the prospect is not inviting. Our church here will probably continue about as it is indefinitely.

We arrive at Genoa on the regular evening for a

prayer-meeting in August, 1890, and repair to the parsonage. It is the second floor in what is called in Italy a palace. The largest room in the apartment is used for church services. The rent of the whole is \$600 per year. The location is unfavorable, but nothing better could be found. It was determined to plant Methodism at this "strategic point" at any cost. A minister was sent here with instructions to find a hall. He hunted two years on full salary before finding it, and then, just as he was ordered to go elsewhere, he sent a telegram, saying the hall had been found. That minister is now superannuated and draws a pension from funds received from our Book Concern and Missionary Society. On the evening above mentioned there was no prayer-meeting. The hall had been engaged by a so-called society for the propagation of the Italian language in the colonies. Its members belonged to some of the best families in the city. The pastor hoped to interest them in Methodism and so invited them to hold their meeting in our church for this special occasion. They talked and talked about a mere nothing till after midnight, smoked, spat on the floor, and departed. Oh! the folly of trying to win the wise and wealthy by conciliatory measures! Some think we must popularize the Gospel; others, that we must adapt it to the upper classes. They think it is the power of God unto salvation only when it is mingled with politics, or literature, or controversy, or philosophy. All this is a confession that

the pure and simple Gospel is powerless, and that something must be attached to it to give it efficacy. This preacher gathered a little congregation and a membership of twelve. His successor wrote us that nearly all disappeared after his arrival and he had to go to work on a different basis and gather a new church. The Minutes of 1893 report a membership of sixteen and an average audience of thirty. This is the result of six years' effort.

Our next stopping-place is Pisa. Here we have an old Catholic chapel remodeled into a Methodist church with parsonage over it. The location is poor. The parsonage is damp and unhealthy. Wicked and incompetent pastors have been the bane of this church for many years. In 1889 it reported a membership and average attendance of fifteen. In 1891 a day school was established with small tuition fee. The effect of this has been to increase the attendance somewhat. The pastor who two years ago was thought by some to be so good and successful has had to withdraw from the Conference under charges. We remember what opposition we encountered when we objected to his admission.

Twelve miles from Pisa is Pontedera. Here we have a little chapel built and owned by Dr. Goucher. The Roman Catholics have bought the land all around it, so as to insure against any possibility of our growth. No heavy insurance was needed. During the pastorate of Brother Dardi, now at Milan, the chapel was well filled. The congregation has now

decreased to an average of fifteen hearers, so the last Minutes say. The leading member for years was keeper of a club-house and sold all namable liquors at the bar, including *liquore d'inferno*, which translated, comes as near hell-fire as anything. We remember how he urged us to take a glass. He is no longer a member of our Church, but frequents our services and is a very disturbing element. We have a school here of twenty-five children. There is no tuition fee. When free text-books were furnished, as they were for two years, there were eighty scholars enrolled. The children stay with us till they are wanted to work. Then the priest takes them, and we never see them more at our church. The school, during the pastorate of Brother Dardi, had many appearances of success. Since he left, it has been of no benefit to our missionary work.

We have now been nearly around the circle of the Northern District. It remains to say something about Rome and Naples. We have said in a former chapter that the old station at Piazza Poli, Rome, has been abandoned and the property sold. Some services were held here during 1891, but with scarcely any audience. In the latter part of 1891, Brother Conte took this station and by zeal and advertising gathered a congregation of from thirty to seventy. Had he continued here with proper support, we are confident he could have achieved success. His success in Boston affords good ground for such an opinion. But he was removed after a few months, and the Italian service was aban-

doned. An English service was attempted here with an average attendance of a dozen or so tourists.

Another service has now for several years been conducted in a small hall on Via Cavour. The school of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the many employees of the Mission make up an audience respectable in numbers. We spent a Sunday here in 1890, and outside of aforesaid school and employees we counted twelve persons in the audience. The two schools and the families of employees in the *Tipografia* and elsewhere would make up an audience of one hundred and more. The Minutes of 1891 and 1892 report an average attendance of fifty, which must be considered pretty good. Of course they can't all go every Sunday. A judicious use of more money would probably increase the attendance. The Epworth League had at one time gratuitous classes in English and French with about forty members. A few of these frequent the services of our Church. At Rome we are building on hopes for the future. At present we have very little to show after twenty years of endeavor.

Naples was visited in September, 1891. We went to our place of preaching in the forenoon and found that the pastor and son had gone into the country on business and pleasure. There was service at noon and another in the evening. At the first were present, besides the family of the pastor, ten persons; at the second, only five. The services were held in the apartment rented as a parsonage, on the third floor of a large

palace in the best part of the city. One needed a guide to find it. Seven hundred and sixty dollars were paid as rent for these lodgings. The pastor rented the place and then got the endorsement of the Presiding Elder. It was a beautiful place to live in, but a congregation could not possibly be attracted there. There were seats for only forty persons, and these were vacant most of the time. Since then another *locale* has been rented, less spacious. We have wasted from first to last over \$35,000 in Naples. *Wasted*, we say, for our present church amounts to nothing, whatever the reports may say, and there is no cause for hope of success in the near future. To thus advertise Protestantism in the largest city of the kingdom, for a series of twenty years, is a disgrace to Methodism, and a positive injury to our cause. It gives the impression that Protestantism is a powerless, contemptible thing. It would be better to sink the money in the Atlantic than to spend it as has been done in Naples. We need a church edifice, well located, and then a man full of the Holy Spirit to fill it, and until we can have these requisites, especially the latter, we had better not play any longer at missions in Naples.

We have visited many of these stations more than once, and have talked with persons who know well their real condition. We, therefore, know whereof we affirm. The annual official reports present the bright, *i. e.*, the hopeful side. Often there is no solid foundation for the hopes expressed.

CHAPTER VII

SOME ODIOUS (?) COMPARISONS

A TRUER conception of any work can be gained by viewing it from various standpoints. It is well for the Methodist Episcopal Church to see its foreign Missions through the eyes of other than official representatives, who are expected to publish chiefly the bright side of the work. The *Christian Advocate*, in its report of the Meeting of the General Missionary Committee of 1892, reports its editor as saying that he was "a cold-blooded editor and did not believe many accounts which the brethren sent to the *Advocate* about revivals held under their own directions." "If the policy was to send all but one American missionary out of the country, he opposed it; that would reduce us to the testimony of one man as to our work, and he would naturally tell what he was pleased to have us know." There is here expressed considerable shrewd insight into human nature.

It was our privilege to travel throughout Switzerland and Germany, to visit many of our missionary stations, to spend a year in Germany, to learn something of the language and converse with many of our

preachers. We made their methods a study, to find out the secret of their success. The secret is an open one. We found no novelties, nothing more nor less than old-fashioned Methodism plus the homes and hospitals of the deaconesses. Let us look at a few of the German stations and see how they compare with our work in Italy.

We spent a Sabbath at the quaint old city of Nuremberg and of course found our way to the Methodist church in Tetzel Street. Our service is in the same building in which Tetzel sold his indulgences and furnished fresh cause for the great Reformation. Then a fictitious salvation could be bought for a trifle of money; now the people receive the offer of salvation without money and without price. About seventy-five hearers were present, and the preacher talked about the "greatest thing in the world," the love described in the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Frequent responses indicated that the truth was passing from heart to heart. They sang better than the Italians. They have better music and a real Methodist hymn-book. The people were social and happy after the service. They are poor but contribute \$100 per year toward self-support. The preacher has two other appointments within two miles of the city and preaches four times every Sunday.

We enjoyed the hospitality of our minister at Liestal, Switzerland. He has thirteen preaching places on his circuit and preaches every night in the

week, except Saturday, and frequently four times on Sunday. This is far easier than to preach once a week, and certainly it looks more like mission work. He has a young man as helper who has served a year for \$125 in order to demonstrate his fitness to be sent to the Theological School as a candidate for the ministry. This young man preaches six times a week. They preach in halls and private houses. There are 300 members in the circuit and the church is self-supporting. Nothing like this has ever been attempted in Italy. Instead a minister with one preaching place and a handful of hearers has often desired and received an assistant.

We attended the twenty-fifth anniversary of the building of our church in Berlin. It has grown to be four large congregations with 600 members and over 1,000 children in the Sunday-schools. There are revival services in some one of the churches almost every night, and we have seen many at the altar here and at Frankfort, seeking salvation in the old Methodist way. The preacher at Berlin is one of the ablest men in the Conference, has a wife and two children, and receives a salary of about \$400 per year. A preacher in like circumstances in Italy receives more than twice that amount and does not half the amount of work performed by pastor Schell at Berlin.

At Frankfort we have a beautiful church, a large congregation, a fine theological school of twenty-seven students, fourteen appointments connected with this

church which furnish opportunity to the students to preach what they learn, and constant prosperity. Not all these German preachers and Professors think alike, and some cordially dislike one another, but this does not hinder them from working heartily to save souls and build up the Church. They work hard and pray and preach earnestly.

We visited other churches and made many inquiries about our work in Germany and Switzerland. These Missions are an honor to our Church. Among the causes of their prosperity we may mention the following :

1. Nearly four centuries of Protestantism. The national character has been thereby modified, the conscience aroused, and a longing for salvation from sin created. In Italy the conscience is seared as with a hot iron.
2. The people are more serious, thoughtful and stable than the Italians. There is firmness of character and moral earnestness in them that are not often found south of the Alps. This seems to be the real reason why the Reformation prospered in Germany and was crushed in Italy.
3. The Mission in Germany was established by Germans of ability and piety who were converted and trained for the ministry in America. They went back in the spirit of self-sacrifice to convert their countrymen.
4. Our preachers have all from the beginning

been trained in the doctrine, spirit, and modes of evangelization of Methodism. No ex-priest or ex-Lutheran preacher has been employed. If Italy had adopted the same policy from the beginning, we should now see different results.

5. The old circuit system is in vogue. Every central church has from six to sixteen appointments in the country villages that surround it. In Germany there are 72 stations and 506 preaching places; in Switzerland, 28 stations and 206 preaching places. Thus local preachers are utilized and the preacher in charge has enough to do. His business is to preach the Gospel every day and not simply to preach once or twice on Sunday and then give himself no anxiety about the work.

6. The class-meetings. Every Methodist in the German and Swiss Missions must frequent these meetings and give his testimony. If he has nothing to say for his Saviour, he is dismissed from the Church. In the class-meetings the weekly offerings for the support of the ministry are received by the leaders, and every member contributes according to his ability. The general collection on Sunday is to pay the current expenses of the church. Nothing like this is known in Italy.

7. The co-operation of the laity, especially of the class-leaders, local preachers, associations of young men and of women, and the deaconesses. All these render excellent service. In Italy the laymen do

almost nothing unless paid for service, and then they do but little.

8. The desire and the earnest effort made by all to become self-supporting as soon as possible. They are poor, many of them very poor. Wages are small, from fifty cents to a dollar a day, but they save conscientiously in order to support their preacher and their church. In this work of self-denial the preachers set a good example. In Italy neither preachers nor people seem to have a desire to become independent financially. They prefer to draw their support from America.

We have now revealed the secret of our success in Germany and Switzerland. We believe that similar principles and methods put into practice in any of our mission fields will in a few years result in marked success, and these methods *can* be adopted anywhere.

For purpose of further comparison let us look at Bulgaria, which as a Mission has been living at a poor dying rate for thirty-five years. The Missionary Committee has an annual debate, whether to continue or close our work there. We visited this Mission in 1893, not expecting to find much, but we found that the Mission was established and has continued on a better foundation than the Italy Mission. The only reason why it has not shown as favorable statistical report is because so little money comparatively has been spent upon it. It now has eleven preachers besides the Superintendent and two Professors in the "Scienc-

tific and Theological School." There are 182 members and probationers, not many after thirty-five years of labor, but no effort has been made to inflate statistics, and persecution is such that only genuine converts unite with the Church. Our people are refused the right of burial in the public cemeteries, and in some instances our dead have been buried like a dog beside the public highway. A Greek Bishop took away the wife and children of one of our members by divorce, because he would not forsake our Church. Our members are poor, yet some contribute one-tenth of their income. They contributed \$9.20 per member in 1892. Of course a large part of this was given by American Missionaries. There is not a station that does not pay its entire current expenses. This has been the rule from the beginning. Bills for fuel, lights, janitor, organist, etc., are never once mentioned to the Treasurer of the Mission. In this respect they differ widely from the Italy Mission, where all such bills are sent to the Treasurer of the Mission for payment. It has been argued in Italy that the people are too poor to pay these bills. The people are still poorer in Bulgaria. Where there is a will there is a way. *Volere è potere.* Notwithstanding the difference in the statistical tables we doubt not there are as many genuine converts in the Bulgarian Mission to-day as in that of Italy.

Though Bulgaria is a land of wine and tobacco, our preachers and members are quite unanimously

abstainers from both. We saw the blue ribbon of the Temperance Society in the button-hole of several of the congregation at Varna. The class meeting is attended by all our members. The ministry has never been disgraced by immorality of any in its ranks. The preachers now remaining are good men and desirable.

The Theological School is rather a misnomer. If God converts and calls to the ministry any students of the school now at Rustchuck, some instruction is given to such as preparation therefor. At present there are none in training. One young man wanted to preach a little while in order to get married and establish himself as a mechanic. He was soon discharged from service.

The Bulgarian Mission has struggled against great difficulties. Its first founders made an impression for good upon men of influence, that can not be tabulated. It has acted as a leaven for the improvement of the Greek Church, some of whose ministers are now preaching the Gospel because of our Mission. It has helped to arouse and strengthen the national spirit, and to throw off the galling yoke of the unspeakable Turk. Two reasons at least, we may mention, for its lack of greater success.

1. The money appropriated has been expended almost wholly in paying the salaries and expenses of preachers who had no place to preach in. Our three or four churches are of recent date, and all of them

are too small. There are no halls to be hired. Few people will go to a private house for religious service. Preaching from house to house is impossible. Open-air preaching would be followed by immediate imprisonment. The first thing to do in Bulgaria is to build some churches, and let us have no more little seven-by-nine stone boxes.

2. There has been a misuse of money. In many cases the salaries of native preachers have been too large. Some now receive \$1,000 per year and house rent. This is far above the salaries of the country. Some preachers have been content to draw a salary and do nothing, and such have been tolerated for many years. A colporteur received five hundred francs per quarter in advance, and a percentage on sales. He sold during the quarter thirty-six francs' worth of books. It evidently costs something to disseminate religious literature in Bulgaria. Formerly preachers were paid quarterly in advance; now at the end of each month of service. This is a great improvement, but it took much firmness to make it, and occasioned many complaints. One Bible woman received \$500 per year as salary. It is doubtful if she could have earned one quarter of that sum at anything else. Two pastors were at one time required in a certain station to take care of two members, with no church to preach in. In another place three pastors tenderly cared for eight members. One preacher for ten years never removed his family from Rustchuck, though appointed to sev-

eral stations. The impression seems to have existed with many, that the Mission is for the financial benefit of the workers employed. In this respect they are just like the majority of so-called workers in Italy. A corrupting financial policy has been *the evil* of both Missions.

The new Superintendent in Bulgaria seems to be the right man for the place, and in his three years of administration has introduced many reforms and done away with some abuses. Some idlers have been dismissed. He needs reinforcements from America to share his authority and aid in his labors. No Mission can be safely entrusted to one man.

CHAPTER VIII

CONFERENCES AT BOLOGNA AND FLORENCE

THE Annual Conference convened at Bologna in April, 1890. Bishop Warren presided with so much grace and kindness that he won the hearts of all. His manner contributed not a little to the spirituality of the session. A more devout and prayerful spirit than usual was remarked by many, and this was manifest especially at the Love Feast. The Bishop gave us wise counsels publicly and privately. It is only to be regretted that he could not visit any of the stations either before or after the Conference. He arrived Thursday morning at Bologna, and departed the following Monday. Such visitation can hardly be called episcopal supervision. Bishop Walden the following year visited nearly if not quite every station, spending a month in Italy. Such visitation has been done by no other Bishop.

One who had formerly been a member of the Conference and had withdrawn was readmitted and stationed at Turin, but just then having received a louder call to another Church, he again sent in his resignation. Our friend who had spent two years

hunting for a hall at Genoa, became superannuated. What a touching letter he wrote us just before Conference of his physical condition and of his brief hold upon life! It was accompanied by the request that we use our little influence to secure for him as large a pension as possible. He had married a daughter of a very wealthy man in Genoa and had need of nothing. Every superannuate expects to be pensioned, no matter what his financial condition may be. The custom of the Government is to pension all employees after twenty-five years of service, without regard to the state of health or finances. Our preachers expect the Missionary Society to adopt a similar policy, even if they have not served a long time. One superannuate received \$240 per year for some time from the Missionary Society. He had served fourteen years. When we remembered that in the Maine Conference the largest amount given to any one, even after fifty years of service, was \$200, we could not help instituting a comparison, especially as we knew of one place where this Italian brother had ten thousand francs at interest. All the time that he was drawing this pension from the Missionary Society there was a fund of over five thousand francs undisturbed that had been received from year to year from distributed surplus of the Book Concern.

The case of one brother was of some interest. He had been educated by the Wesleyans, but was unacceptable to them. There is more than one Super-

intendent in Italy that has a way of recommending to another denomination men whom he does not want. After he had preached five years in the Methodist Episcopal Church, we became informed of a book published anonymously by him in the first year of his ministry, in which he avowed the rankest pantheism. He denied the personality of God, the divinity of Christ, the efficacy of prayer, the need or possibility of regeneration, and conscious existence after death. Yet the committee on examinations had reported him sound in the faith. When charged with being the author of the book he at first denied it, but when the proof was presented, he confessed its authorship, but declared that those were his opinions five years before, when he thought that "Methodism might be thus philosophically interpreted." Now he had changed his mind. He was, however, asked to withdraw from the Conference, and did so. We were told that he wrote to a friend soon after, reaffirming the opinions of that book. He was, however, soon received into another evangelical church in Italy on the "warm recommendation" of the Presiding Elder, as we learn from an authority in that Church. The preacher who, on being turned out of one denomination, cannot find acceptance in another, must be a poor thing indeed. We never knew such a case, and the preachers that have belonged to two or three different denominations may be counted by the score. In this respect Italy is not altogether unlike America. Even here

almost anybody who can talk glibly, can get into one pulpit or another.

This Conference marked a change in the management of publications. A paper called the *Fiaccola* had once been published, sometimes bi-monthly, sometimes weekly, and at last once a month. Its character depended upon the character of the changing editor. Sometimes it was a philosophical journal; sometimes it was a controversial sheet; and sometimes it was a religious newspaper. For some reason it had been discontinued. It was thought best not to resurrect the old paper, but to start a new one. Some difficulty was experienced in selecting a name for it, as all interested were desirous of christening the child, but finally the name *Evangelista* was agreed upon as best corresponding to our conception of what the paper ought to be. The first number contained a translation of Wesley's "Character of a Methodist." It seemed to meet with some favor, and at the end of the first year fully five hundred copies were subscribed for and sold regularly, a number considerably in advance of the circulation of the *Fiaccola*. Some preachers took much interest in the paper and sold many copies. Others piled up a stack of papers, sent them for distribution, behind the pulpit, as they still continue to do. The effort was made to make the paper intensely religious and distinctively Methodist. Editorials were written on the class-meeting, prayer-meeting, the witness of the Spirit, modes of evangelization, etc.

Rare bits of religious experience and selections from standard Methodist authors were translated for publication. Moral reforms were not neglected. We bore down too heavily for some on the use of tobacco, and two articles against the use of alcoholic beverages, especially wine and beer, awakened much indignation that can hardly be characterized as righteous. Nobody complained when sin in general was assailed, but when the sins of those who read the paper were mentioned, some began to show that they were under conviction enough to make them mad. One of the articles was a review of *Die Alkoholfrage*, by a German Professor, published in English by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The other was a review of *Alcoolismo*, a work by Sig. Tito of Rome. We did little more than re-echo the positions and opinions of these publications. Some letters received were not specially complimentary. One did us the honor to call us a fool, an ass, a liar and, strangest of all, a drunkard. "You must have been drunk," he said, "when you wrote the article." Other letters were of a more encouraging character, especially the one declaring that the reading of Fletcher's prayer for purity of heart had been the means of his awakening and conversion.

Owing to a lack of hearty co-operation on the part of some a larger part of the paper had to be written by the editor than was anticipated. Its literary style was of course not all that could be desired, and without

the aid of an Italian proof-reader its publication would have been quite impossible. But we cared more for substance than for form and aimed to make the truth pointed though rough-hewed. The outeries showed that some arrows hit the mark and were sharp enough to pierce. The paper was never designed to please sinners, though sinners outside the Church were not offended. They never complain of the pointedness of truth. It is the easy-going church member and minister that gets wounded, perhaps because conscience is sufficiently awakened to take the truth home.

At the Bologna Conference a preacher who had not subscribed or written for the paper, and had not obtained a subscriber on his charge, offered a series of criticisms against the paper. The result was that the Bishop, after much consultation and hesitation, transferred the seat of publication to Rome, and after one year our critic became the editor of the *Evangelista*, and has continued in that office up to the present. It is unnecessary to add that the entire character of the paper has changed. It treats especially social, political, and semi-philosophical questions, and has a sprinkling of secular, literary, and religious news. It does not respond to the religious needs of the people, and does not fairly represent the convictions and principles of Methodism. It has been "pronounced by competent judges to be the best religious paper in Italy." Equally competent judges said the same thing of it before the change of management, and between

the paper as it was then and as it is now there is little resemblance from the religious point of view. If we mean to establish in Italy a Methodism of the Wesleyan type, then it is of the utmost importance that a full-blooded Methodist be the editor of that paper, and such a one can not be found at present among the Italians. It will be a long time before he will be produced. The editor of that paper has the best opportunity of all in Italy to preach the Gospel, and it is a great pity that the opportunity is not fitly improved. By means of that organ Methodism might be constantly taught to our people. Some of the members of the Conference have been clamoring for a daily politico-philosophico-socio-controversio paper with a minimum of religion in it, and they say openly, the less religion the better.

We pass over an uneventful year to the Conference at Florence in May, 1891. Bishop Walden presided. He had visited many of the stations and had been with us at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, held in Florence a month before. He had much to say to the Conference, relative to the importance of observing Methodist usages, such as kneeling in prayer, etc., and inquired why such usages had not been observed. Various excuses were given, but the real reason was not mentioned. A minister will never act like a Methodist until he *is* a Methodist. If he does not believe in our economy and usages he will not adopt them, or if he does, only mechanically. We

have no Methodist preachers among the Italians. This is why our usages are rejected. Many may say in America that certain forms and ways of doing are not essential, but we agree with the Bishop that they are very important. Leave out the peculiar ways and methods of the Salvation Army and there is no reason for its existence as a separate body. Leave out the kneeling in prayer, the altar services, the protracted revival meetings, the class-meetings, the camp-meetings, the responsive "amens," the "how do you do, brother and sister," the personal testimonies and the hearty prayers of the laity, and even if the doctrine preached were an echo of John Wesley's, there is no Methodism in such a church. Now all these things are left out, for the most part, in Italy, and, moreover, the doctrines of Wesley are not preached, because generally not known. We do not believe an audience in the Italy Conference ever heard a sermon on the distinctive doctrine of Methodism.

Two were received into full connection in the Conference, S. V. Ravi, and Ernesto Fillipini. The latter came to us from the Wesleyans with his little church at Pavia, consisting of twenty-five members. This was with the consent of the Wesleyan authorities who had not funds sufficient to maintain all their work. This preacher had been for years a Professor in the Government Schools, and came to us, as he declares, with the express condition that he should be allowed to continue in that vocation. He received, as teacher,

a salary of about 1,900 francs from the Government, and as preacher 1,400 from the Missionary Society. Of course he could do no pastoral work and his time and strength were given to teaching. After a few months he was called to a professorship in Rome and left his charge without consent of the Presiding Elder, expecting, moreover, that his salary, as Methodist preacher, would be continued, and that some light ministerial work would be found for him at Rome. Disappointed in this, he withdrew from our Church. The little church at Pavia remained for us to support and helped to swell the statistics.

At this Conference the Theological School and the School of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society were targets for criticism. A paper was sent to the Conference, signed by all the young theologues, complaining of three things. (1). The food was not satisfactory in quantity or quality. (2). They were required to be in the house by 10 o'clock on pain of being locked out for the night. (3). They were not duly respected by the servant girls. The Committee on Education threw aside the complaints as unworthy of consideration. As to the first, they had sat at the same table with the Director and Professors of the School, had eaten much better food than they had ever had at their own homes, and had paid therefor nothing. As to the second complaint, after repeated warnings, they persisted in being late at breakfast and out late at night. One day the Director was sick

in bed, and the students, being all very tardy, were refused breakfast by one of the Professors. They "struck" for liberty and absented themselves from all recitations that day. They were again warned at night to be in at a certain hour. They were all out at that hour and consequently had to remain out all night, going to a hotel. They thought to appeal from the Faculty of the School to the Conference. As to the third complaint, they were told that respect could be commanded only by showing themselves worthy of it. If they acted like gentlemen they would be treated as such by all. These boys seemed to be somewhat ashamed of themselves, after we had explained to them the error of their ways, or was it from policy that one night at chapel service, soon after, a large bouquet was found upon the table with a card on which was written, "*Al Direttore,—per amore?*" For love! We shall see the depth of their affection in a subsequent chapter.

The same complaint about food was made concerning the School of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society and later on the Boys' Institute, so called, at Rome, raised a rebellion on the same issue. Was there ever a free Boarding School where the pupils thought the food was good enough? These are small matters, but they reveal character, and show what difficulties must be encountered in training up preachers for Italy.

We had asked that the Conference meet at Florence

and had looked forward to it as a benefit to the School. The result was a sad disappointment. There was nothing in the meetings to awaken and intensify spiritual desires or to heighten ideals of the ministry. On the contrary, the students were drawn into intrigues, and saw and heard much to injure them. We saw what we had long suspected, that the influence of the Conference members could speedily neutralize the effect of all our training in the School. All we had said in favor of Methodist usages and of a profound spiritual life, lost its weight when they saw so many practical contradictions in the ministers themselves. It is the task of Sisyphus to train up Methodist preachers under such influences. We must first purge out the old leaven, otherwise a short experience in the Conference will undo largely the work of the School.

CHAPTER IX

MINISTERIAL SALARIES

WE now touch the tendon of Achilles, the point where the arrow of criticism is mortally felt. The fundamental error of the policy thus far pursued in Italy is in connection with the question of ministerial support. We have been told that under the early administration the salaries paid depended mainly upon the will of the Superintendent, and this was the best and only possible policy in the initiation of our work. It gave opportunity also to reward merit and diligence. After a few years this plan was not satisfactory to some, and a scale of salaries was fixed upon by a committee consisting of the two American Presiding Elders and three Italian preachers, and adopted by the Missionary Board.

The plan of paying all the preachers according to a schedule has its objections. In no other employment and nowhere else than in the Mission field is a workman paid according to his age and the size of his family, but according to the work he does. This is God's plan of payment both for this world and for the next. Every one according to his works. That a weak, lazy, unsuccessful preacher should receive the

same salary as one who is active, able, and successful, is not according to nature and justice. A preacher, as well as any other workman, will do more and better work if he knows the material welfare of his family depends upon his activity and faithfulness. The higher motive of saving souls and the rewards of the next world may be sufficient stimulus for a few, but such motives are not powerful enough in Italy, and they are not always sufficient in our own country. Our theory of a "comfortable support" according to the size of the preacher's family is a dead letter. The preacher in the long run gets paid according to activity and success. In the Methodist Church especially there is the yearly possibility of going up higher, which acts as a powerful stimulus. The principle is a good one for both preacher and people, though it may be abused by selfish ambition.

There is no stimulus to ministerial activity in the Italian Mission aside from that of conscience. Every preacher knows he will have a place so long as he manages to avoid expulsion from the Conference, and he cares very little whether it be in the city or country, since the salary is adjusted accordingly. The policy of paying all alike naturally attracts men of weak ability and mercenary motive. It is very noticeable that since this system was adopted a less able class of preachers have sought and found admission to the Italy Conference.

Until 1892 the salaries of preachers in the Italy

Mission were according to the following scale. In consequence of our criticisms a slight modification was then made, enough to say that there has been a change and to provoke some discontent, but not enough to remedy the evil. The change reduced the salaries of full members of Conference about \$25 per annum, and each child in stations of first and second classes now receives \$12 per year less than before.

System of Salaries—Stations divided into Three Orders.

	1st.	2d.	3d.	
To "Supplies," at the will of the Presiding Elder.	I.
To unmarried men, on } 1st year trial as assistants } 2d " "	\$264 300	\$288 336	\$324 360	Rome. Milan. Geneva. Turin.
To unmarried men, as } 1st year preachers in charge } 2d " "	324 360	360 396	384 420	Genoa. Florence. Venice. Naples. Palermo.
To unmarried members of Con- ference	420	480	540	
To unmarried men, seven years members of Conference . .	480	540	600	II.
To married men on } 1st year trial as assistants } 2d " "	300 360	360 420	420 480	Bologna. Foggia. Pisa. Alessandria. Perugia.
To married men as } 1st year preachers in charge } 2d " "	384 420	432 480	504 540	Terni. Modena. Forli. Faenza. Pontedera.
To married members of Con- ference	540	600	660	
To married men, seven years members of Conference . .	600	660	720	III.
To married men for every child	60	48	36	San Marzano. Dovadola. Melfi. Venosa.
For traveling expenses per day, railroad fare and	2.00	1.80	1.60	
House-rent in addition to this.				

The following table shows the practical application of this scale in 1892 in salaries actually received.

Station.	Family.	Salary.	Rent.
Adria . . .	Wife, 2 children, . . .	\$504	\$100
Alessandria .	Single,	480	Parsonage.
Bologna . . .	Wife,	660	Parsonage.
Dovadola . .	Wife,	380	50
Forli . . .	Wife, 1 child,	648	60
Florence . . .	Wife, 4 children, . . .	960	Parsonage.
Foggia . . .	Wife, 3 children, . . .	804	240
Genoa . . .	Wife, 5 children, . . .	960	600*
Milan . . .	Wife, 4 children, . . .	840	Parsonage.
Modena . . .	Wife,	660	110
Naples . . .	Wife, 3 children, . . .	840	760*
Palermo . . .	Wife,	660	600*
Pisa	Single,	480	Parsonage.
Rome	Wife, 6 children, . . .	900	Parsonage.
"	Wife, 3 children, . . .	900	Parsonage.
Terni	Wife,	660	200
Turin	Wife, 3 children, . . .	780	Parsonage.
Venice	Wife,	360	300*
Venosa	Wife,	360	50
Perugia	Wife, 3 children, . . .	804	Parsonage.
Geneva	420	
Canelli	Wife,	360	60

*One large room is used also for church services.

Now these salaries do not look large from the American point of view, and the smaller salaries of the "supplies" show how economically our preachers can live in Italy. To rightly judge of these salaries one needs to know the wages paid in Italy. An ordinary farm laborer gets 20 or 30 cents per day; a stone or brick mason 50 or 60 cents; a male teacher

in elementary school 60 cents; a type-setter 60 or 80 cents; clerks and agents in railroad stations and post-offices 60 cents per day for the first year, afterward from \$300 to \$500 per year according to rank and term of service; Professors in *Ginnasi* and *Licei* (which correspond to our high schools and colleges) from \$300 to \$600 per year without house rent and without regard to the size of their families. For example Lanna, who withdrew from our ministry, now receives 2,400 lire = \$480 per year, as Director and Professor in a Technical School. Filippini, who also withdrew from us, receives in a *Ginnasio* at Rome 1,920 lire = \$384.¹ These figures are taken from the Government Report.

Our financial policy appears in clearer light when the salaries of our preachers are compared with those paid by other Missionary Societies in Italy. We here give a comparative Table of Statistics :

¹ A citation from the United States Government Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1888-89 confirms the above statements. Speaking of education in Italy the Report says: "By a law of 1886 the salaries in the rural schools were to range from \$140 to \$180 for men, and from \$112 to \$144 for women; in city schools from \$180 to \$264 for men, and from \$144 to \$211 for women. . . . The salaries of Professors range as follows: *Ginnasi*, or lower grade classical schools, \$309 to \$386; *Licei*, or higher grade, \$387 to \$425. . . . At the minor Universities the salaries range from \$579 to \$694." pp. 188, 189.

Annual Salaries Paid by Various Churches in Italy.

Cities	State of Family	Methodist Episcop al	Wesleyans	Free Church	American Baptists	English Baptists	German and Swiss Conferences
Rome, Naples, Palermo, Florence, Milan, Turin, Genoa, Venice, Geneva,	Single man Married man with 4 children	\$540 or 600* 660 or 720* 900 or 960*	\$312 540 750	\$480 660 756	\$312 480 624	\$187 \$300 to 600 500 to 700	
Bologna, Pisa, Foggia, Perugia, Terni, Forli, Modena, Ponte- dera, etc.,	Single man Married man with 4 children	480 or 540* 600 or 660* 792 or 852*	312 540 690	420 540 636	312 420 552		
San Marzano, Venosa, Dova- dola, and like small towns,	Single man Married man with 4 children	420 or 480* 540 or 600* 684 or 744*	312 540 690	360 480 576	312 360 480		

* According as the preacher has been more or less than seven years a member of Conference.

In addition to these salaries house rent is paid in all cases. For each child our Church allows \$36 or \$48 per year till the child is twenty-one years of age. The Wesleyan Church allows \$30 (in exceptional cases a little more) till the age of twenty. The Baptists allow \$30 till the child is fifteen years old. Our German Mission allows nothing for children after the age of eighteen.

The Wesleyans and Baptists pay the taxes of their preachers, which may average \$20 per year. The Free Church allows from \$18 to \$24 for fuel in stations north of Florence.

An examination of the foregoing table will show that the difference between the salaries of our preachers and those of other denominations does not appear so distinctly in the smaller stations, but nearly all our stations belong to the first or second class and here our salaries are from \$200 to \$300 per annum higher than theirs. Reckoning house rent our preachers in the larger cities have received more than twice what a College Professor receives in the same city. Can any one tell why this should be? Certainly our preachers have no greater learning or ability than they. It has been said that the Professors add to their salaries by giving private instruction. The amount thus gained is not large, and not all Professors have this opportunity. The gain would not be equal to the house rent we pay. Why should our preachers have more than those of other denominations? It has been said that we can by this means get better preachers than they. This is not true. The Methodist Episcopal Church has not done anything in Italy to warrant the claim that our preachers are superior to others. The natural effect of this financial system is just the opposite of this claim. The men of mercenary spirit in other denominations learn that we "pay our preachers magnificently," as one has said, and hence they seek

admission to our Church, and thus betray their own. To our knowledge eight or more preachers of other evangelical churches have during the past few years sought admission to ours. Seven that we now have are transfers of this sort, and with one or two exceptions are of no use to us. The only thing that attracts them is the larger salary. Let our salaries be cut down to the level of the salaries of the Baptist Churches for example, and more than half of our ministers would leave us at the first good opportunity, and this is one of the reasons why we have zealously advocated a reduction in salaries. The sooner they go the better.

But it has also been said that the Methodist Episcopal Church is great and wealthy, and is abundantly able to pay her preachers a good salary. No, considering the amount of work on hand to be done, and the means available to do it, our Church is not yet rich and increased in goods and having need of nothing. Is our Missionary Society wealthy enough to be lavish in her expenditures? If it had millions to spare, it would not be *wise* to give to a foreign Mission any more than is barely sufficient to aid a Church struggling toward self-support. No great work of God has ever been built up without much self-denial, suffering and privation. When our Italian preachers are ready to endure the poverty and hardships of early Methodism in England and America, yea, of the Methodism of to-day on the frontier and in

the poorer circuits, we shall see different results in Italy. We fear that much of the money that has been poured into Italy by Protestants of every name and land has become unintentionally a corruption fund, to lessen personal consecration and lead many to rely on human means rather than on divine power.

One of the evil effects of our bad financial policy has been discontent among the preachers of other denominations. Rev. Mr. Shaw, who directs the work of the Baptists in Rome, wrote us, in response to the inquiry whether our larger salaries have a bad effect upon the preachers in other Churches, “I must answer, yes; I have frequently heard the salaries in the Methodist Episcopal Church alluded to in a way that indicated a not very wholesome state of mind.” Rev. Mr. Wall of Rome, who directs the work of the English Baptists, wrote thus: “I hope that Bishop Walden may give the matter your letter refers to his serious attention. I think that other Evangelists are influenced by the fact that you pay larger salaries to your men and I am decidedly of the opinion that this matter ought to be one of common accord. Anything you may propose in this direction I should sympathize with.” We know from personal conversation with other leaders that they are of the same opinion and feeling. Thus it is seen that our financial policy has not only been fatal to success in our own Church, but has also been a stumbling-block to other denominations.

But the greatest evil of our financial policy is, that

it makes self-support in the Italy Mission forever an impossibility. Doubtless it will be admitted by all as axiomatic that the aim of all missionary endeavor in foreign lands is to build up a self-supporting and propagating Christianity. No Mission field can forever draw funds for its cultivation from another country and people. The converts from Paganism and Catholicism must be taught as soon as possible that the support of their pastors and churches is one of the most important Christian duties, as it is one of the grandest of privileges to those who have truly received the "unspeakable gift." Now a self-supporting Church in Italy can never pay its preachers the salaries we are paying. The Roman Catholic Church does not. To be sure her dignitaries receive large salaries, but the common priests are poor and receive but little. One, who wrote us asking to be received into the School, said that his salary was only \$11 per month, and that, too, in the city of Rome. No congregation will or should pay their preacher a salary two or three times as great as that received by the average well-to-do family in his flock. When the congregation is poor, the preacher, too, must be willing to be poor. Otherwise he can do them no good. We have not contended for smaller salaries in the Italian ministry because we want to impoverish the ministers. Far from it. We wish some of them had twice what they now receive, if it were possible and wise. We only want them to come down somewhere near to the level of the people they serve, or at least to a level to which

it will be possible to raise the people. From \$200 to \$500 per year is all that a self-supporting Church in Italy can pay its pastors for a hundred years to come, with but few exceptions. It is all thousands of preachers receive in America, where the cost of living is often greater. It is, we are well informed, all that many Waldensian pastors receive in the valleys of northern Italy, and we know some Waldensian pastors with families, in large cities, who receive only \$500.

Some of our preachers do not want a self-supporting Church, and say that they hope they may never receive their salaries from the people they serve, for then the preachers will be considered the servants of the people. It is the old idea of priestly domination, an idea that can be worked out of them only by necessity. Many would like to be supported by the State if that were possible. While our preachers are receiving their present salaries, a poor laborer who has only two, three, or four francs a day on which to support his family, must think it an absurdity, when he is asked to contribute to pay his pastor's salary.

Look at our India Mission. What folly it would be to pay to our native preachers the salary of an average itinerant in America! Would we ever reach a self-supporting Church on that basis? It sounds small and almost mean when we hear that our native preachers receive at first an allowance of only \$30 per year.¹ But that is the only wise policy. That is

¹ See *Gospel in All Lands*, Sept., 1892, p. 441.

more than they received before they became preachers, and as much as the people can pay who live on less. At first this had to come from the Missionary Treasurer, but gradually the converts have been educated to contribute this or a greater sum for their pastors. If we had adopted the policy in the beginning, and continued it, of paying our native preachers in India \$50 or even \$20 per month, the India Mission would now be in about the state of our Mission in Italy.

We were led to the foregoing reflections by the request of Bishop Walden to investigate the matter and to inform him what salaries were paid by the various denominations in Italy. We were so much impressed by the importance of the results of our investigation, that we sent a report of the same also to the General Secretaries of the Missionary Society, and received no answer whatever for our pains. One of the secretaries has since informed us that he never saw the report. The Bishop, however, duly rendered thanks, and at the next annual meeting of the Missionary Board some resolutions relating to the matter were adopted. In our letter to the General Secretaries, in July, 1891, which contained the substance of this chapter, we said: "I have no confidence whatever in the present financial policy of this Mission, and cannot consent to waste my life in misdirected efforts to build up Methodism here. We must have a revolution or abandon the field. I vote for the revolution."

CHAPTER X

SELF-SUPPORT

SUPPOSE a home-missionary to go into any town or city in New England for the purpose of establishing a Methodist Church. He first hires a hall or as large a room as he can find in a private house, or he takes a large apartment and fits up his parlor as a place of religious service. If he is abundantly supplied with money, he buys an old abandoned church and repairs it, or he buys a piece of land and builds a small church. In all this business he consults with nobody in the town and asks no one for financial assistance. After he has secured his hall or church he puts in pews or chairs, lamps or gas, pulpit, stove, an organ, Bibles and hymn-books, and perhaps a coarse carpet. He hires a parsonage and moves in with his family. On a certain day he advertises the opening of his church by handbills and placards. Everybody is invited to come. A few curiosity-seekers drop in and listen for a little to see what this new man has to say. For a long time no public collection is taken for fear of throwing a coldness over the meeting. After a long time a collection may be taken on Sunday half-apolo-

getically, the object of which is to assist in defraying the expenses of this church, or for the relief of the poor. The latter object is dwelt upon more particularly and frequently. The congregation and community meanwhile learn that there is a large and very wealthy Missionary Society that has furnished all the funds for this movement, and they know the pastor will lack no needful thing. He says, in effect, to his congregation, "You contribute what you like to pay the expenses of this church, and the Society I represent will pay the balance. If any new furnishings are needed for the church or Sunday-school, send the bill to the treasurer of the Mission." Now what will be the natural results?

1. The community from the start has no interest in this new movement. It is a foreign importation thrust upon them. They have no part or lot in the matter. From curiosity they drop into the church now and then, and if the preacher says something in harmony with their political views they applaud and go again whenever he advertises a semi-political subject. If he rebukes their sins and preaches the necessity of regeneration, the pews are empty.

2. For the most part, persons of noble character and social influence stay away. They don't want anything to do with an institution of charity. They have too much manly independence. This movement does not in any way represent them.

3. The collections amount to next to nothing.

They are not sufficient to pay the small current expenses of the church. As for paying the preacher's salary, why should they? He has a sure salary very much larger than theirs. They throw into the basket the smallest pieces of money coined by the Government, more for the appearance of giving something than as a glad and conscientious offering. If a subscription paper be circulated among the members of such a church and congregation, but very few will sign it, and from those few who do, it will be about as much as it is worth to make the collections. So at least the preacher thinks, for no one else has any interest in the matter, and he has but little, for the result does not effect him. He wants perhaps to make a fair appearance in the statistical reports as compared with other similar churches, and so tries to raise something.

4. Of such a church there are of course no Trustees and the office of Steward is a nominal one. The so-called stewards have no interest in collecting money because they feel no responsibility. They will come together to talk about who shall be admitted to the church, though they generally accept the recommendation of the pastor as sufficient in this matter. They show some interest in the question of the support of the poor, and from time to time suggest that the Missionary Society should add something to the small fund collected among themselves. They get into the habit of thinking that the pastor is responsible for his flock, and that he must somehow provide for all the

poor and sick and also bury the dead. “What is the good of having a church, if its members are to receive no material benefit from it?”

5. A lot of mendicants flock to this church. We mean not only beggars but those who have the mendicant spirit, who want their religion at the cheapest possible figure with a chromo thrown in. They are always present at the communion service, for then there is a collection for the poor, and they wait after the service for the distribution of the money received.¹ Those who have given a fraction of a cent wonder at the smallness of the contribution. A crowd of tramps and beggars knock at the pastor's door. They expect him to furnish money for all their wants. If they don't receive what they ask for, they will leave his church and go to another similarly organized but more liberal in the distribution of money, clothing, and soup. If the pastor says the collection for the poor is all exhausted, what is that to them? Does he not represent a wealthy Missionary Society, and has he not a fine salary? And so the daughters of the horseleach cry “give, give.” They realize the blessedness of the inverted motto.

6. A few good, humble souls attach themselves to such a church, if the pastor is at all spiritual. They do what they can, and know no better way of managing a church. They “struggle” along, and at the end of twenty or one hundred years the condi-

¹ We have seen this done repeatedly in Florence.

tion of that church is about what it was at the end of five years of its existence. The annual report says that it is "holding its own" and hoping for a revival.

7. The members have no love for such a church, and are held to it by a brittle thread. It is not really their church. They, in a certain sense, belong to the church, but the church does not belong to them. Any trifling circumstance is enough to sever their connection with it. With a change of pastors there is likely to be a change of congregation and membership. The pastor must be worldly in order to be popular. To hold or increase his congregation he preaches and conducts the affairs of the church in such a way as to disturb the prejudices of none. Sin in the concrete is not rebuked. The pastor never says, "Thou art the man." Or perhaps, if he is a mere hireling, he reasons that his material welfare does not depend upon the size of his congregation, and so it is all one to him whether the people come to church or stay away. If he enters church very late and finds an audience of half-a-dozen or less he concludes that it is not worth while to preach to them and so has no service that day. He is always ready to join another denomination if thereby his salary can be increased.

Now we maintain that such will be the inevitable results anywhere upon the face of the earth of a church established in the manner supposed. Such a church is not a mere idle fancy. We have drawn upon our memory for facts rather than upon our imagination.

Such is the Methodist Episcopal Church in Italy, save as in a few stations the exceptional character and activity of the pastor have made some favorable modification of the picture presented. The whole basis is unsound. It is an attempt to build up the Kingdom of God by a judicious use of money alone, which proves to be the most injudicious use to which money can be put. The more money employed, the more stations, and the more hangers-on, and the greater statistics, and the more machinery and the less power from on high.

Now let us imagine a more excellent way. A lone itinerant enters a strange village or city. Perhaps he has been invited by letter of some one who has found Christ or is in search of Him, or he has heard that there are those in that place who want religious services established, or he reasons on general principles that God has not left himself without a witness in any city. He goes hunting for souls. His pockets are full of tracts. He converses with as many as possible. He inquires if there are any Protestants or any who are dissatisfied with the religious state of that community. He calls on such, talks and prays with them, suggests a prayer-meeting or a preaching service. Soon he finds some one who is willing to throw open his doors and invite persons thought to be in sympathy with the new movement to come in to a religious service. Our itinerant talks to them from the heart about Christ and the Holy Spirit and the

joys of salvation. The Spirit always accompanies such a message and the people are blessed. The audience says, "This is good, why can't we have another service and invite our friends and neighbors?" The preacher agrees to be there on a certain day. Where shall the service be held? The largest room offered in some private house is accepted. The preacher does not go to one of the best hotels in town. He does not need to. He receives an invitation to lodge in some humble apartment, and prefers this, because he is with congenial people. Soon the room is altogether too small for the audience. What can be done? Can we not combine and hire a small hall? A few persons are found, who are ready to take the financial responsibility and make the necessary collections. Then the preacher says, "If I am to serve you, you must at least be willing to pay my necessary traveling expenses in coming regularly to preach to you, and also entertain me at your homes." This they do gladly. They also agree to take a collection for him every time he comes. He has a large circuit of such appointments, and very soon collects enough to pay all his expenses. It costs but little to run such a church. It somehow or other seems to take care of itself. There is no hired janitor to open and shut the hall. The brethren take turns in such little offices. The hall gets furnished gradually by contributions and donations. After a year or two they feel able to buy an organ, if some one can be found to play it gratuit-

tously. They never think of hiring an organist. So the Church grows. By and by somebody suggests the building of a church. Can we ever do it? Who will help us? Everybody begins to talk about it. Then the preacher announces that he can secure for them an encouraging gift or loan from a Church Aid or Missionary Society. This decides the question. They build the church, contributing what they can and soliciting from almost everybody in the town. It is *their* church. Everybody who contributes a cent towards its erection feels that he is a joint-owner. All the contributors go to that church and are not easily driven away from it. None are too poor to give something, though it be but two mites. Nobody hangs around this church for the loaves and fishes. The pastor comes to live with his people. They shower gifts upon him. Nobody in that church ever thinks of asking *him* for money. Is he not the minister and the dispenser of the treasures of Heaven to them, and shall they not minister to him in material things? The Holy Ghost has come to that Church and inaugurated the dispensation of liberal giving. They love to talk about salvation. The class-meeting is a delight. The church is full of exhorters. Sinners are sought after. Praying-bands and singing-bands are formed, and soon the talk is, "Where shall we establish a mission or a Sunday-school?"

Can such an ideal be realized? Everybody in America will say, "yes." "But America is not

Italy, and the conditions there are entirely different." Well, that is the way substantially that our Methodist Conferences have been built up in Germany and Switzerland. "But those are Protestant countries, and there is not the opposition of the Papal church." Well, that is essentially the plan on which stations are being planted in heathen Africa. It was the plan of the Apostles in all countries, except that they had no Missionary Society to draw from in any case. That plan is based upon faith in the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit, and has never failed yet. It will do for Italy in all its essentials, and we could cite illustrations to prove this.

A young man converted in Venice returned to his native town about fifty miles therefrom to preach to his old acquaintances. He was turned away from his father's house, and for thirteen months he wandered from door to door, sleeping and eating as Providence provided for him. He held meetings in kitchens, stables, and sometimes in a field. He could not preach, but he could pray, tell his experience and distribute tracts and Bibles. No evangelical pastor had ever been in that town. At the end of the thirteen months, when he entered our Theological School, he could count about twenty converts and fifty adherents or sympathizers with the movement. During a summer vacation the number was greatly increased, and he got many subscribers to our paper, and sold many tracts, Bibles and religious books. But the needs of

our work demanded that a “strategic point” should be “held,” and so he was taken from the School and stationed at Venice, where he has not, with good house and salary and all the church machinery desired, had one quarter of the success he had as an independent and moneyless exhorter. Our system has about spoilt him.

Before our Mission took possession of an independent church in Rome, its janitor served gratuitously for love of the cause. When he with the rest of the church became Methodist, he was paid from the Missionary Treasury, and soon he was a drunken backslider. The facts suggest a causal connection, but possibly his downfall was due to other influences. The point we wish to show is that in Italy it is possible to find those who are willing to do something for the advancement of the kingdom of God without being paid for it.

In the Free Church every station is required to pay all its own current expenses and to contribute besides annually \$120, \$80, \$40 or \$30 for the support of the preacher, according to the grade of the station. The preachers are made responsible for the collection of these sums, and if they are not collected, the loss is theirs. Under such circumstances the collections can and will be made. We have repeatedly urged that some similar plan be adopted for our stations, requiring them to raise a reasonable sum assessed according to the ability of each station, and

making the pastor financially responsible, but have met the objection that our people cannot be compelled to give and would in this way be driven to other churches. Hence we pass the collection box, and the people give according to the impulse of the moment. In Florence something was done toward developing regular and conscientious contributions. Venice reports 46 francs collected for the support of the church, and 127 francs for the poor. In 1890 there were appropriated by the Missionary Society 5,150 francs for current expenses of the churches, and 5,117 francs were collected for self-support. Thus it is seen that the Italy Conference contributes nothing for its preachers and raises only about half the sum necessary for current expenses, *i.e.*, to pay the janitor, organist, etc. It must be remembered, too, that a considerable portion of this sum is contributed by foreign residents and tourists who are connected with or friendly to the Mission. In Florence such residents contributed more than all the one hundred members of the church together, and we think the same may be said of Rome and some other places. The statistics of Florence also include 300 francs received from the rent of a small shop that belongs to the Missionary Society. This and the contributions of foreigners must be deducted if we want to find the true financial ability or rather generosity of Italian Methodists. It will be found on strict comparison that there are not so many members of our Church in Italy, nor

are the collections so great, as ten or twelve years ago. At this rate of progress when will there be a self-supporting Church?

The world over this principle holds good in religious as in other affairs, that people will not pay for anything more than is asked for it, unless they are impelled by the Spirit, who in that case is the collector and demands *all*. Voluntary contributions, without any urging, work beautifully in a church where there is a constant revival spirit. If this be lacking, the people must be exhorted to bring all their tithes into the store-house before the flood-gates of Heaven can be opened and the blessing outpoured. What costs nothing is worth nothing, and persons really converted may lose their appreciation of the blessings of salvation, if they are not asked to share the burdens as well as the privileges of the Church. Not the least of the evils of our financial system in Italy is that it tends to diminish piety and to develop a selfish dependence upon others. The collections in Macedonia benefited those churches more than they did the poor saints at Jerusalem.

“That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain.”

In view of the pressing needs of the world every convert from Paganism or Catholicism should be constrained, yea, a necessity should be laid upon him, to give and to do all that is possible for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom. Where this is not done

will always be found a church that hath a name that it liveth, but is dead. We recall the testimony of Mr. Wishard, delegate of the Young Men's Christian Association to make a tour of the world. In conversation with us he said that wherever he found a self-supporting Mission or one tending toward self-support, he found spiritual prosperity, and in such Missions only.

Somehow our Italian preachers and members must be disabused of the notion that they are helping the Missionary Society to establish the Methodist Episcopal Church in Italy, and the opposite notion must be implanted, that the Missionary Society sends men and money to help them re-establish a primitive Christianity. Under the influence of the former notion they want to be *paid* for every Christian service, and the object is to gain adherents. Our *portinaio*, or janitor, at Milan does something also in the way of distributing Bibles and tracts, and receives therefor house rent and 80 francs per month. He wanted an increase of salary and gave to us this reason for the same, "I get a good many to join your religion." When professedly Christian women have been asked to do some religious service in the way of visitation or seeking children for the Sunday-school, they have replied, "The Bible woman is hired to do that service. Pay us and we will do it." A preacher leaves his charge and is absent three days, to baptize the child of a friend. The bill for traveling expenses is seventy francs and is

paid by the treasurer of the Mission. Another preacher sends in a bill of ninety francs for medical attendance, alleging that his wife's ill health is caused by the dampness of the house furnished by the Missionary Society as a parsonage. The real cause of the sickness appeared a few months later in an increase of family. These and many similar occurrences grow out of the idea that they are at work for the Missionary Society, and not that the Missionary Society is at work for them. Some plan should be adopted whereby the amount appropriated to each station should be dependent on the amount raised by the station itself for self-support. All money should be given as help and not as pay. Methodist ministers are not *paid*. That is not our theory of ministerial support. A "comfortable support" means generally such a support as the people feel disposed to give the preacher. If the Missionary Society adds anything to this either in America or in foreign lands, it should be considered by the minister and people as a benefaction, donated by benevolent contributors, precisely as the Macedonians sent offerings to Paul. The Apostle never supposed he was getting a salary for his ministerial services. The opposite theory prevails in Italy. The Missionary Society *pays* the preachers, and the people served give their benefactions to the Missionary Society. Many seem to think they are doing us a favor when they join our church. The system that has developed and fostered such notions is evidently wrong. The

only way to correct these errors is to adopt a different financial policy.

There is a good deal yet to be learned about self-supporting Missions. This term as applied to the work in Africa may not be strictly accurate, but it expresses a difference in financial policy that is of the utmost importance. It throws the moral responsibility of support upon the people who receive the services of the preacher, and lays a basis on which converts can be educated to put into practice the principle of self-support. When the people realize that they are being helped to do a work that belongs to them as a duty to do, they will be grateful and show their gratitude by accepting as little help as is absolutely necessary. We do not contend for an absolutely self-supporting Mission at present either in Italy or Africa. Some stations could soon be put upon that basis, and this ought to be constantly set before the people as the goal of their endeavors. God helps those who help themselves, and the Missionary Society would do well to adopt the divine policy. There is a limit to His kindness to the unthankful. Even when the value of a thing is appreciated, people will not pay for it, if it is offered as a gift, and the fact that it costs nothing tends to lessen the appreciation of its value. Some in all lands want a "free Gospel," without money and without price. This means a Gospel that is free to them because somebody else has been generous enough to pay for it on their behalf.

We do not expect unconverted heathen or unconverted Catholics to support a preacher till they have learned to appreciate his message, but we do expect church members and those who ask for a preacher to take upon themselves some share of the responsibility of his support. Twenty years or more of assistance from abroad ought to be enough to put some churches at least on a self-supporting basis. Our Missionary Society has spent \$700,000 in Italy, and we have not a church that does more than pay its current expenses. Every preacher we have in Italy draws his full salary from America. How long must this continue?

CHAPTER XI

TRAINING OF NATIVE PREACHERS

THE inauguration of the Theological School was an attempt to build a pyramid by beginning at the apex. It had no basis in preparatory schools, and in all the Methodist churches there was not one young man properly prepared by age, experience, piety and education for admission to such a school. The Waldensians have been centuries in laying foundations and have a constituency of 30,000 and good preparatory schools, yet during thirty-five years of its existence in Florence their Theological School has graduated only an average of two every year. It was thought that the Methodist Episcopal Church in Italy, with a membership of less than a thousand and no schools, could produce as many ministers as were desired, almost to order. Now a good many men have to be educated to find a preacher. Even in Italy God does not call all impecunious young men to the ministry, and the only way at present to find out whether a young man is called to the ministry or not, is to take him into the Theological School and watch him a while. If

the ministers and Quarterly Conferences could be trusted in their judgments as to the fitness of young men for the ministry, it would be better to test the "gifts, grace and usefulness" of young men by employing them as exhorters a year or more before receiving them into the Theological School. This is the plan adopted in Germany and it works well, because the preachers in charge of the various stations have the right ideal of a Methodist preacher. But it has been found in Italy that our preachers will recommend any sort of a young man as a candidate for the ministry. The only way to find out the true character of the candidate is to live with him a few months or a year. The School is the only proper test at present. The result necessarily will be that only a small part of those admitted to the School will be graduated and admitted to the ministry. A careful, wise, and more extended supervision of the stations by American Presiding Elders would doubtless diminish greatly the number of unworthy students admitted to the School; still with all proper and possible caution some black sheep will get into the fold.

It would be far better to do this testing of character and fitness in preparatory schools. What would our School of Theology in Boston do if it were backed by a Methodist membership of less than a thousand and had not only no colleges, but also no Conference Seminaries, no schools of any kind? A Theological School would be a misnomer in such a case. The only thing

possible would be the establishment of a training school for Christian workers, with instruction suited to the mental and spiritual capacity and attainments of the few young men that might be found, and practice almost every night in the week and on Sundays to determine whether they were really called of God to the ministry. This was our ideal of what ought to be in Italy, but the "powers that be" determined to have a Faculty of five Professors and to introduce Hebrew and all the studies of a long-established School of Theology. Hence much hard labor was expended on young men whose immature and uneducated minds were not fitted to grasp the problems put before them. To be sure they all felt more than equal to the tasks assigned, and those who were the youngest and least capable were puffed up with pride and thought themselves able to instruct the Professors. By frequent weeding and by experimenting with new cases we had, in 1892, found about a dozen young men who, we tried to believe, and sometimes we succeeded in the effort, were promising candidates for the ministry.

We shall never forget the visit of Bishop Vincent and Dr. Hurlbut in the autumn of 1891. They spent over a week with us and repeatedly addressed the School. The Bishop wanted some information about the students, etc., for publication, and we furnished the same in writing. It appeared over the Bishop's signature in the *New York Christian Advocate* sub-

stantially as we gave it. We here quote from his article :

I sit in the study of Dr. E. S. Stackpole, on the third floor of our Methodist Episcopal headquarters for Florence. It is a large, well-built house, on Via Lorenzo il Magnifico, Numero 24. We rent it. One day, the good Lord allowing and leading, we shall own a great central building in Rome for our theological and other schools, our publishing department, and our church services in Italian and in English. But now we are in the president's study. It is *pro tem.* the class-room of systematic theology. Three young men are seated at a round table in the center of the room. They are lightly built, agile, keen, alert; black hair, black eyes, dark complexion, children of the sun, sons of Italy. How rapidly their pens glide over the page as they take down the lecture of the president on the "Church as a *Holy Institution.*" He asks : "What is a holy church?" "How is its holiness in doctrine, spirit, and life to be maintained?" He answers these questions. They write as he reads. They are interested. They have already enjoyed educational advantages in the excellent national schools of Italy. They were born after the Pope's power waned. Boys are educated now in Italy. When Victor Emmanuel entered Rome two decades ago seventy-five or eighty per cent. of the population were illiterate. The new regime, which the pope seeks to overthrow, has reduced the percentage to forty-two. A great gain! Those three students in Dr. Stackpole's class are from the "Gymnasium," or "Lyceum," and are good Italian scholars. They are picked men. They are young men. They are Methodists in theory and experience and choice. They represent the men who are to spread over Italy the doctrines and life which God has appointed our Church to preach.

The Theological School has been in existence two years and a half. It has a dozen students; about the same number as the School of the Waldensians, which has been in Florence for thirty-six years. This dozen has been selected out of fifty-six applicants for admission. Nine others have been on trial

for a time in the school, and dismissed as lacking the intellectual or moral qualifications for the ministry. The administration proposes to retain no young man who does not give promise of becoming a winner of souls. This school and the Conference in Italy will not be an asylum for those who find themselves for any cause out of employment.

Of the twelve students now in attendance, four are graduates of the Lyceum, which is equivalent to the American college. Two others have passed through the Gymnasium; that is, are ready to enter the sophomore class in America. Another, who was until recently a Roman monk, has had two years in philosophy and four in theology in the Roman Church. The rest have had the instruction given in the public schools in the technical course. The age of these students varies from eighteen to twenty-six years. The average age is about twenty-two. They come from all over Italy. Venosa, the birthplace of Horace, sends a representative. Genoa sends another, who has had, in addition to the studies of the Lyceum, three years of medicine in the university, and can speak the modern Greek. One is the son of our preacher at Naples. From Turin comes a fine young man of Waldensian family who speaks French, and is carrying on a course of study in the university in addition to his work in the Theological School. The son of the Wesleyan Minister at Milan has just asked for admission. In addition to the twelve young apostles now in the school, an ex-monk under training for the Baptist ministry comes in as a day scholar, taking a special course of study.

The students preach occasionally in Florence or at a station not far distant, and have done good work during the summer vacation as assistants in several stations. The course of study is about the same as in the usual theological seminary with the addition of English. Before graduation all will be able to read readily our English theological literature, and some will be able to speak the language. A few show remarkable facility in acquiring it.

Dr. Stackpole, who is an intense believer in the most intense type of Methodism, and a loving disciple of the wise

and devout Daniel Steele, labors most faithfully to promote the spiritual life, to train the heart and conscience. He endeavors to interpret the most practical and experimental portions of Scripture in the every-day chapel service at 5 P.M., and in the students' class-meeting on Saturday night. One of the most refreshing religious meetings I have attended for years was this same Saturday evening class. The experiences of the young brethren, which were translated for me by Dr. Stackpole, had the true ring and filled me with large hope for our work in Italy. Dr. Stackpole says that "the material we now have to make Methodist preachers of is as promising as any average dozen that might be chosen from Drew Seminary or Boston Theological School."

Now one reading that description of our Theological School would naturally conclude that we had a remarkable set of young men, and so they were. All that was published was true, and a better company of young men cannot be gathered into our School in Italy under present conditions. We go further and record our conviction that it will be impossible to gather so good and promising a company of young men as candidates for the ministry in Italy for many years to come. We searched the land through and got all that were at all hopeful cases. But in the report given above there are a great many things unsaid. There is no mention made of the instability of Italian moral and religious character. Piety is superficial in Italy. There is momentary enthusiasm and emotion, but religion does not reach down into the conscience and get a firm grip. Nothing is said in the report about habits of deceitfulness, nor of our constant fears that these nice young men would aban-

don the ministry and the Methodist Episcopal Church whenever they thought they could improve their condition by so doing. Moreover, the report is not a full one because we were ignorant of some things learned later. We now complete the report.

The Bishop admired especially a young man who had just entered the School. He was very quiet and studious, better educated than any other student. All passed on beautifully for some months, and hopes ran higher than ever for the prosperity of the School. One day the room-mate of this young man came to us with the most startling revelations and accusations. This quiet youth, he said, was a rascal of the deepest dye, in correspondence with a Jesuit official. He was guilty of all manner of iniquity. The Faculty were astounded. We had not seen any indications of such a character, and, moreover, we had had complete confidence in his accuser. Of course there was an investigation. The accuser and the accused were brought face to face, and at the first interview we began to suspect that the former was the rascal and sought to conceal his own bad character by accusing his companion. Continued investigation confirmed this suspicion, and facts subsequently made known demonstrated the innocence of the person accused. But the accuser had told his story to the other students before informing the Faculty, and so they were prejudiced against the accused. Indignant virtue asserted her claims. They demanded the immediate expulsion

of the accused, and when the Faculty replied that this could not be done without great injustice, that the case was a complicated one and needed further investigation, that a little patient waiting would determine who the guilty party was, they would not wait a moment, but at once sent in a paper previously concocted and signed by every one except the accused and another who at that time was absent from the city. "In view of the strange indecision of the Faculty," and the manifestly unworthy character of the accused they felt conscientiously compelled to leave the School. This burst of righteous indignation rather pleased us. It showed at least that conscience had been sufficiently awakened to despise and frown upon the sin of others, which demands, however, not a very high state of moral cultivation but is better than indifference to wrong-doing. Of course their "resignation" was immediately accepted, and they were ordered to leave at the earliest moment possible. This rather surprised them. Like sophomores in an American college they thought to frighten the Faculty into compliance with their wishes. Soon some began to reconsider. The result was that four students remained and the rest went home, among them two who would have graduated after two months more. They whispered abroad their expectation of having a new Faculty. Immediately they began to telegraph and write to parties in America, whose support they confidently expected. Their expectation was neither unfounded nor unrewarded.

After the agitated waters began to subside, it was found that considerable sand and dirt had been cast up. We discovered that every one of these students except the one accused had been secretly breaking the rules of the School, by going to the theatre once, twice or thrice, by getting out or in at the window late at night, by improper associations, etc. The accuser especially was found to have had a very bad record, and his subsequent history leads us to class him among religious tramps. By borrowing and begging he managed to get first to Switzerland and later to London, where he is said to have united with the Salvation Army. Within two years he was back again in Italy, and just now we have received a letter from him, in which he asks forgiveness for his part in the wicked plot, and declares that the students would not have acted as they did, if they had not been encouraged by members of the Conference who were unfriendly to the School or Faculty. The young man accused afterward came to America. Nothing has ever been found against his character. He is now a student in the School of Theology of Boston University, highly commended by the Professors for scholarship and Christian conduct. He is preaching every week to Italian and to French congregations.

The amount of ingratitude and presumption displayed by some of these students was amazing. They considered themselves under no obligations to the Methodist Episcopal Church for having received their

education at her expense, and said plainly that their time spent at the School was an equivalent for all received. Some declared their readiness to abandon Methodism and at once sought admission to other denominations. Failing this, some drifted into whatever employment they could find. We found they had no love for Methodism, for which we could not much blame them, since the so-called Methodism of Italy has manifested few amiable qualities. We did hope to create an ideal Methodism in their hearts by the study of our history and doctrines and by spiritual culture. The effort was not very successful. The ministry was for the most of them too much a commercial affair. A position with a salary seemed to be the main issue. There were some exceptions. In the plot to break up the School some were deceived and led on by two or three of corrupt mind. Some we had loved and cared for for three years, and we built high hopes upon them. We do not forget the tears of gratitude in the eyes of more than one who thanked us for instruction and for favors received. Our labor was not wholly in vain in the Lord. We recall occasions in the School when the presence and power of the Holy Spirit were felt in a most gracious manner, and we cannot think that all our prayers and counsels and instructions were for naught. Let us hope that some of these boys will by and by become men, having grown up into "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The whole affair gave us deeper insight into Italian character. Young men in Italy develop earlier than in America. A youth of seventeen may appear a phenomenon of brilliancy and mental ability, in advance of most American young men of twenty-one. But at twenty-five or thirty the American young man would generally be far ahead in power of thought and stability of character. The Italian has more brilliancy than depth, more language than thought, more emotion than purpose, more zeal than perseverance. His head may be converted to Christianity, while his heart remains essentially heathen. An outward show of religion takes the place of an inward principle, and this often without hypocrisy.

How often we have called to mind what Bishop Thoburn has related of his early experience in India, especially the account of that good young man who came to study with him for the ministry. He placed great hopes upon him and thought he had found a jewel, when one day a police officer arrived to arrest the young man for murder. He had run away from justice and thought to conceal himself under the garb of a preacher. We did not have any candidates for the ministry quite so bad as that. Some were good boys and in America would make acceptable and useful preachers. In Italy we cannot prophesy what the result will be. There are too many corrupting influences. We remember, too, Bishop Thoburn's search in America for missionaries for India, and how he

sifted down one hundred applicants to two and finally lost one of these. Let none, then, be surprised if all of the candidates for the ministry in Italy do not turn out well. Good, devoted, conscientious, true, able and educated young men are not so easily found, even in America.

We wish here to record our appreciation of the kindness and sympathy of the Faculty of the School. The utmost harmony prevailed. Every action was unanimous. The Italian Professor was appointed to the chair of Greek and Hebrew Exegesis not at my suggestion, yet we labored in union, and he did his work faithfully and well, considering all the circumstances. He had too much to do, and the students were not prepared to appreciate the studies pursued. Hence, encouraged by some critics in the Conference, they affected also to criticise his work, but it was the captious criticism of the ignorant. We are glad to say that during the last year of the School there was one little company in Italy who could work in complete harmony.

Partly in consequence of the disturbance above mentioned it was decided to discontinue the Theological School in Florence. A year later an attempt was made to establish a similar school in Rome. It has three students. One is a converted monk who was with us one year at Florence. The second is an ex-priest who was rejected by the unanimous vote of the Faculty at Florence after he had lived in the house with

us two weeks. He lacked, we judged, mental capacity. The third has also been preparing for the priesthood. Our past experience with ex-priests leads us to hope for but little from the present theologues at Rome. An excellent man is at the head of the school, who will succeed if anybody can, but the conditions are such that failure is almost certain. If a Preparatory School shall be developed, then after ten years a Theological School will be a possibility.

CHAPTER XII

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

FOR twenty years or more it has been the policy of several Missionary Societies in Italy to establish Elementary Schools in connection with many of their stations, and in a few places schools of higher grade. Our Society has not adopted this policy till within six years. We now have day schools for children in half a dozen towns and cities and some evening schools for young men. It has been found that the success of these schools depends mainly upon the preacher in charge. A few preachers are adapted to that kind of work and enter into it with enthusiasm. Their successor cares nothing for the school and perhaps desires to minify or destroy the work of his predecessor. So the school runs down and becomes worthless. The Minutes of 1891 report a school at Palermo of four teachers and ninety-five scholars. A few months later there was no school at all. Pontedera reported three teachers and one hundred and sixty-eight scholars in the day and evening schools. There were a few months later only thirty in the day school, and the evening school was discontinued. The same school

now has eighteen scholars. It was found that this school, that at first promised so much, was really a failure and of no advantage to our missionary work. It was a free school and attracted the least hopeful class. So two of the teachers were removed to Pisa, and a school of a little higher grade was opened there, with a small tuition fee. It is too early to state the results. There is the same difficulty with the schools as with the churches. As the latter have been planted without properly prepared preachers, so the former have no teachers that are devoted to missionary work. From the Waldensians and Wesleyans we have obtained for the most part the teachers employed. It is, for those who know not the causes, surprising how few Christian workers of any sort our Church has developed in Italy. Other denominations have supplied us all along.

The Elementary Schools are only experiments. No one of them is established on a permanent basis, and they are in danger of vanishing away with the first change of pastor. It was thought that by getting the children into our schools the parents could be drawn into our church services, but the results in this direction have not been encouraging. As soon as the children are able to earn a few cents per day, they are put to work, and we see them no more. We are convinced that free schools in Italy will be of no benefit to us. There are good public schools in all places of importance, and we cannot compete with

them. We cry out in America against the policy of the Roman Catholics in removing their children from the public to their ecclesiastical schools, yet in Italy we are trying to inaugurate the same policy. To be sure we are not yet clamoring for a division of the Public School Fund, but if we were as numerous in Italy as the Catholics are in America, would we not demand it?

A far better policy would be to establish a few schools of higher grade in important cities, schools adapted to boys and girls from twelve years of age upward, in fact something corresponding to our High Schools or Conference Seminaries. Such a school should develop, after a few years, into a college. The corresponding terms in Italy would be a *Ginnasio* and a *Liceo*. There should be a respectable tuition fee, not less than is demanded by public and similar private schools. The number of free scholarships should be very limited, otherwise it would be in danger of becoming merely a charity school. The High Schools for boys and for girls at Smyrna, conducted by the American Board, are wisely managed. The first has ninety, the second one hundred pupils. The Boys' School has nine teachers. The tuition for nine months is \$20. Board and tuition for the same time \$100. There are no free pupils. Five languages are taught. All instruction is given in English as soon as that language has been learned. We found that the same rules prevail in Robert College, Beirut College and

in the large School of the Presbyterians at Cairo. In all these English is the basis of instruction, and tuition is well paid for, so that the schools can be put upon a self-supporting basis.

Some steps have been taken toward the founding of a school at Rome. A very fine lot of land has been purchased in one of the best parts of the city, and the plan is to erect a large building upon it. Indeed the corner-stone is already laid. The lot cost \$40,000 and \$100,000 are asked for to erect the building. It is designed to serve not only for a school of high grade, but also for a Theological School, Publishing House, apartments for preachers and Professors, and a church. Whether all these can wisely be combined under one roof is questionable. The location is good for a *Ginnasio* or *Liceo*, if day scholars are desired. For boarding pupils a location a little way outside the walls with plenty of land for playgrounds, etc., would be preferable. For a church the location is not nearly so good as Piazza Poli, which has been abandoned. It is surrounded by Government offices and the houses of the wealthy. The church, we fear, will be little more than a chapel for the schools. We ought to have at Rome a great institution of learning, that would become for Italy what Robert College is for Bulgaria and Turkey. The foundation has not been laid for it, yet this present enterprise, if rightly planned and managed, promises better results than anything thus far attempted by the

Missionary Society in Italy. If all the money spent for the first ten years had been put into such an Institution, we should have saved what now has been squandered. To develop such a school there ought to be now in training several Americans of the best ability. The Italian teachers suited to such a school must be educated by the school itself. They can not be found at present. If special attention were given to modern languages, and English were the basis of instruction, there are a large number of wealthy and influential families in Rome that would prefer such a school to any now existing in that city.

The policy first advocated was to establish simply a boarding-house or Home for children and youth and send them to the public schools for instruction. This was the ideal some had of a great Methodist Institution at Rome. On this basis was begun what is called a "Boys' Institute," which according to the *Gospel in All Lands* of July, 1892, has eighty pupils. Doubtless this was a typographical error, but we looked in vain for its correction in subsequent issues. There were in reality only eight boys, ranging in age from ten to eighteen, three of whom had to be expelled for stealing. Several were charity pupils. Latest reports say the number is now about twenty. The Missionary Society rents and furnishes a house for them and hires a man to take care of them in the Home. They go to the public schools for instruction. To advertise this as a school is evidently misleading. To make it a school

in reality will require a considerable endowment for professorships. It may develop into a school in the future, but thus far it has been little more than a charity boarding-house, and was advertised as a “semi-gratuitous” institution.

This word semi-gratuitous, with the emphasis on the last part of the compound, expresses the present policy of the administration. Everything must be furnished either for nothing or for less than cost. This is the shortest way to apparent success. A semi-gratuitous school will attract a certain class of pupils, who will be glad to have a furnished room in Rome, board, and instruction in English and French for thirty francs or six dollars a month. The furnished room alone is worth that. The instruction in English and French cannot elsewhere be obtained for thirty francs per month. In the best Boy’s School at Florence the tuition fee alone is thirty-five francs per month. This is precisely the source from which the school should expect its revenues. The board alone costs thirty francs or more. But we must adopt a policy that will attract a large number of pupils at once, no matter what it costs. Our paper, the *Evangelista*; too, must be published at half what it would cost if there were 5,000 subscribers. Sixty cents a year for an eight-page weekly! When shall we have, as in Germany, a self-supporting paper at this rate! Some writer from Rome in the *Christian Advocate* says our Italian papers are now paid for by funds raised in

Italy, and in another column of the same *Advocate* was published a request asking for a grant of \$700 from the Tract Society for our publishing interests in Italy. Let none be deceived. All moneys collected from subscribers to our paper in Italy and for sale of books have never yet paid the cost of the blank paper and printer's ink. American contributors in one way or another pay the bills. Books are sold at half the cost of publication. This destroys all hope of an independent business in the future. It sounds very well when Missionary orators tell us of a great Publishing House in Rome that will soon be scattering Bibles over the land. The fact is that all papers and books that the Methodist Episcopal Church now prints in Italy or will need to print for many years to come could be published at half their present cost, if the authorities were less ambitious to have a Publishing House all our own and would employ some Italian firm to do all but the literary work. As for Bibles there is no probability that one will ever be issued by the Methodist Press of Italy, since the great Bible Societies of New York and London can publish Bibles in Italian so much cheaper and better. The British and Foreign Bible Society now has forty colporteurs distributing Bibles throughout Italy.

CHAPTER XIII

DIFFICULTIES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS

It has been told that when the establishment of the Italy Mission was under discussion, as it was for many years, the old sage, Dr. Curry, said, "I have little confidence in the Latin races." He spoke of course from a religious point of view, and certainly the history of those races does not justify us in building great hopes upon them as promoters of pure and evangelical religion. It is the custom to say that Catholicism has shaped the religious character of the Italians, French and Spaniards, but is it not as true that the people have shaped the Catholic Church? The influence is reciprocal. The Gospel when wielded by the Holy Spirit has power to transform the national as well as individual character. Indeed the former necessarily results from the latter, but in a time of spiritual decline the national spirit reacts upon its religious faith and *cultus* and gradually develops a religion suited to its tastes and genius. It is often said that Catholicism has cauterized the national conscience of Italy. When did it do this? Was the conscience of Italy any more awakened and tender in

the sixteenth century, or in the tenth, or fifth, than to-day? Has it not always been essentially heathen? Before the alliance of Church with State and the gradual absorption of the latter in the former, the power of the Spirit transformed the heathen into a Christian conscience. Since the third century with few exceptions the masses have been converted by wholesale, or by the magic touch of water in infant baptism. Brought up to believe that they have no need of regeneration they remain heathen under the forms of a Christian civilization. The Church has become what such civilized heathen want it to be. They want a Church that has power on earth and in *Purgatorio* to forgive sins. They want a Church that can save them without the necessity of thorough repentance on their part and corresponding reformation of conduct. To have such a Church they must give to the priesthood great power, and as a recompense they cast individual responsibility for the most part upon those who have the cure of souls. To be sure they have not always relished, and especially since the unification of Italy, the tyrannical exercise of priestly power in affairs that pertain to this life. There has always been but little opposition to leaving the affairs of the next life to the decision of "Holy Mother Church." It is so much easier to shirk all unpleasant responsibility.

The forms of worship of the Roman Catholic Church, its processions, vestments, images, incense

and mass, are all outgrowths of national character and date from long before Christ. Her music, painting, sculpture and architecture are all in harmony with the genius of a people who prefer the outward and the sensuous to the inward and spiritual. The Roman Catholic Church everywhere is essentially Italian, the outcome of baptized Roman paganism. Talk about Americanizing the Catholic Church in the United States! When that is done, it will be no longer Roman Catholic. The whole organization all over the world is the result of a propagation of Italian ideas, manners, tastes, etc., in matters of religion. The church is a great deal more Roman than Catholic. This is true especially since the time of the German Reformation. Since then Italy has ruled the Church. All the Popes for three hundred years have been Italians. The great majority of the Cardinals have always been and still are Italians, and nothing short of a national revolution, that shall drive the Pope out of Rome and overthrow Catholicism in Italy, as it was overthrown in England and Germany, will do away with the Italian character of the Roman Catholic Church. We repeat that it is truer that the Italians have made the Church than that the Church has made the Italians.

Why did not the Reformation of the sixteenth century take root in Italy? The Italian Protestants of the present are in the habit of excusing their ancestors by saying that the Protestants of that age in Italy

had not the protection of any powerful princes like Henry the Eighth. It is true that thousands of Italian Protestants suffered martyrdom or were driven into exile, but these were the exceptions. There was no great movement among the people, and there were but few leaders of profound religious conviction and spiritual power. It is not in the genius of the Anglo-Saxon peoples to content themselves with superficiality in religion any more than in other things. They have too much hard sense to accept the dogmas of Catholicism and too much rough sincerity to allow their consciences to be quieted by outward ceremonies.

Yet the Gospel has proved to be the power of God unto salvation even to Italians. It produced martyr heroes in the early centuries, and all through the ages there have been those who counted not their lives dear unto themselves. Some have been ready to die for an idea rather than for Christ. The mendicant orders are proof that the Italians were once capable of self-denial, and had zeal and perseverance. The names of Anselm, Arnold, Savonarola and many others will be immortal in the Church's catalogue of heroes. Especially in the northern part, in the smiling valleys and on the rugged slopes of the Alps have always been found a people of harder moral fibre. Their whole religious history stamps them as rather Swiss than Italian or French, and their influence is felt and impressed upon the national character all through Piedmont and Lombardy. Here, if anywhere, Protest-

anism can get a firm foothold. Here there is material for Methodism already half formed. The religious conquest of Italy must proceed from the north.

The difficulty, then, that exists in the national character is not insuperable, and, moreover, there are elements in the Italian character that are specially favorable to the spread of genuine Methodism. The people are naturally lively, enthusiastic, emotional, talkative, hospitable and generous. Everybody can sing and shout, too, when there is anything in his heart to shout over. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of our church members would transform them from "silent partners" into shouting witnesses for Jesus. An Italian filled with the Spirit would not be able to keep still. Let not what we have heretofore said with regard to the mendicant spirit of many that hang around the evangelical churches be interpreted as applicable to all the Italians. The better and nobler class of Italians we have not reached. Our system attracts the mendicant class just as molasses draws flies. When the pearl of great price is really revealed to the heart of an Italian, do not think that he will not be as ready to give his all for it as any other. The generosity of the people ought not to be judged by the conduct of hackmen and porters who beset the tourists and cry out for a *mancia*.

Another difficulty that has been much magnified is the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church. Naturally that church tries to retain its own and keep

its members from frequenting evangelical churches and its children from attending Sunday-schools. They have sometimes defeated or delayed the building of a Protestant church. A colporteur in some out-of-the-way town has now and then been ill-used. Unstable members have been drawn back into the Catholic Church by worldly inducements, and many are hindered from breaking away from Catholicism because of social and commercial relations. But the opposition to Protestantism is not what it was forty years ago. The cry of "down with the Papacy" is now popular. The Protestants have the protection of the Liberal party as against the Clericals. All Protestant worship is tolerated and protected by the government. A large proportion of the people have no sympathy whatever with the Papal Church. They have forsaken the confessional and the mass. The Pope has more influence over his Catholic subjects in America than in Italy. The nearer to Rome one gets, the more disgust one finds with Popery. To ascribe, then, our lack of success to the oppositions of Catholicism is a vain excuse. The bare mention of the Jesuits is sufficient with some to account for all failure. There are multitudes of Catholics in Italy that are only nominally so and would respond quickly to the touch of spiritual fire.

A greater obstacle is to be found in indifferentism to religion. Knowing nothing better than Catholicism they reject religion altogether. Many declare them-

selves deists and atheists. Infidel journals are numerous. In Germany and Switzerland we have seen the Catholic churches crowded with evidently devout worshipers. The example and the opposition of Protestantism are a barrier to indifferentism in the Catholic Church. In Italy very few men are seen at the mass, and preaching is rare except in Lent. On Sunday morning the women go to mass and a few men. In the afternoon they go to the horse-race or whatever amusement there may be, and in the evening to the theater or café. Only intense spiritual earnestness born of the Holy Ghost can awake the people from this indifference. The Gospel in Italy must be accompanied with mighty power. A style of Christianity that verges almost upon fanaticism is needed. Old-fashioned Methodism, we believe, is better adapted to the needs of Italy than any other form of Christianity, *i. e.*, a Methodism that insists upon immediate repentance, upon the direct witness of the Spirit, and upon an uttermost salvation as the privilege and duty of every believer, and not only insists upon these truths, but testifies as to their conscious reality. Such preaching and testimony would have opposition enough from Catholics and Protestants alike, and sleepy indifferentism would wake up and get mad and then—converted.

A great difficulty in the way of the advance of Protestantism in Italy is the divisions among the Protestants themselves. The Evangelical Alliance

met at Florence in 1891 and talked about unity and harmony, and some almost quarreled in the discussion. It was evident to all who were acquainted with the situation that petty jealousy and ecclesiastical ambition prevent union or hearty co-operation. The larger denomination is, as usual, accused of pride and prestige. The weak one grumbles because he cannot be as big as somebody else. Within a denomination there are parties and cliques, and it seems that everybody is for himself in particular and for his denomination in general. Can any one tell what essential reason there is for two branches of Methodism in Italy with separate ecclesiastical organization? The Wesleyans were there before us. If the Methodist Episcopal Church felt bound to do something for the religious regeneration of Italy, why not have given some financial aid to the Wesleyans and let them cultivate that part of the Lord's vineyard? Some want to spread the Methodist Episcopal Church all around the globe and have an idea that it is going to swallow up all others. What is the matter with the other branches of Methodism? What ails the Mother of us all? She wanted to unite with us at the beginning of our mission work in Italy, but her offer was refused.¹ We approve the sentiment of a Bishop who said in our study, "Why could not the Methodist Episcopal Church have given ten thousand dollars a

¹ See Dr. Reid's Missions and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. II., p. 333.

year to the Waldensians and bid them God-speed in the evangelization of Italy?" We prefer Methodism to Waldensianism, *i. e.*, genuine, historic Methodism. In some respects we prefer historic Waldensianism to what it is to-day. We believe it has been weakened by being helped too much.¹ Still they are doing better than any other evangelical church in Italy. What real reason is there for the existence of another Presbyterian Church in Italy? They have talked about uniting, but never will, so long as foreigners will furnish the money to maintain two rival organizations. All over the heathen world we hear the same lament about the divisions of Protestantism. In Japan the cry for union is being listened to. In Canada we have a united Methodism. In the United States the question of organic union is constantly agitated. Where is the reformer who will bring about not only this union of the branches of Methodism, but can see the excellencies of other denominations also and seek a union of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ under the common name of the Evangelical Church? May God hasten his appearing. He is much needed in Italy.

But if organic union is a present impossibility, there should be at least fraternity and co-operation.

¹ We recall a remark made by a missionary of long experience in Egypt. He had spent a long vacation at Torre Pellice, among the Waldensians, and had studied their history and work. He said, "The Waldensians have been helped so long that they have lost their muscle." We might add that some other Churches in Italy have been helped so much from the beginning that they have never developed any muscle to lose.

To have this there must be mutual concessions and frequent consultations. All petty jealousies must be laid aside. The prosperity of any Church must be looked upon as so much gain to the common cause. The superintendents and leaders of all the Evangelical Churches ought to meet at least annually for prayer and consultation and continue in session two or three days. There is no good reason why a uniform system of salaries could not be adopted, and we know that some superintendents are heartily in favor of this. Then there would be no temptation for the preachers to pass from one denomination to another. There should be mutual agreement not to receive the disaffected members of another Church without consent of all parties concerned. This eagerness to swell the statistics by enrolling seceding members of other Churches is destructive to all church discipline. The abandonment of one's church without sufficient reason should be considered an act of treachery, and any appearance of proselyting should be frowned upon. In occupying new stations there should be an agreement not to interfere with the work of a sister Church and so far as possible to seek out those cities and villages that have not yet been evangelized. Mutual counsels might put an end to the formation of Sunday-schools by enrolling the children of another school. One Sunday-school is enough for any child. Some general rules for the treatment of the poor and for the care of the sick should be adopted, so as to put a stop to

the too common practice of seeking assistance from all the churches. Some poor or lazy evangelicals wander around from church to church and prey upon the sympathies of the impulsively good. Begging is not considered a dishonor in Italy, though forbidden by law. The monks and nuns have for centuries set the example and given, so to speak, dignity to the employment. Protestantism should teach its adherents industry and economy, and then in some systematic manner render assistance to the worthy poor. The funds for the relief of the poor should in all cases be collected among the Italians, and not from foreign residents, tourists, or Missionary Societies.

We have indicated some of many things that demand a mutual understanding among the various Evangelical Churches. The discussion of these might lead to better understanding, heartier co-operation, less denominational pride, and more brotherly love, and so pave the way for organic union of Protestantism in Italy, if such a bright dawning is ever yet to rise.

CHAPTER XIV

SUPERVISION

THE establishment of the Italy Mission was debated many years in the Missionary Board. There has never been unanimity as to the wisdom of that movement. Many contend that our first duty is to evangelize the heathen world, and that foreign Protestant and Catholic lands should be left to work out their own needed religious reforms. Some even now are in favor of abandoning some of our Mission fields that have not yielded encouraging results in order to put the money where it will do more good. "To him that hath shall be given." The most successful Missions naturally receive the largest share of sympathy and support. Every laborer wants to see the fruits of his effort. Every giver wants to know what results follow his contribution. An unsuccessful Mission cannot always be maintained. Patience gets exhausted after many years, and the contributors demand either an abandonment of such a Mission or the adoption of a new policy on which may be based a more reasonable expectation of success.

Some who were not in favor of the establishment

of the Italy Mission nevertheless urge its continuance. It is hard to acknowledge defeat or mistake. Methodism is slow to retreat from any post occupied. It has talked about abandoning Bulgaria for many years, and now sends a new superintendent with determination to hold on. The Liberian Mission has never been considered a success, yet the church holds on to it and now there seems to be a new life infused into it by the adoption of new methods and policy and by the personal inspiration of Bishop Taylor. So we doubt not the Missionary Society will continue to cultivate Italy as a mission field, and sometime—it may be after wearisome years of trying to believe that failure is comparative success—will change its policy and methods. Fortunately, or unfortunately as some may think,—Italy is too near home to escape observation, and the Methodist tourist will investigate a little on his own private account, and write up the real condition of the Mission, if he can find a publisher. We have already indicated by implication some absolutely necessary changes in financial policy. We proceed to mention others of great importance.

There must be a more constant and careful supervision. The Presiding Eldership may be abroad as well as at home a “fifth wheel in the coach,” or it may be a help to all the churches on the District. A good man may be rendered inefficient by putting upon him so much to do that he has time to do nothing well. He may visit all the stations three or four

times a year, spend one night or half the Sabbath at each station, preach and hold the Quarterly Conference and ask all the routine questions. The church is very little better off for such a visit, and he is very little wiser. What impression can a Presiding Elder be expected to make upon the character and work of his preachers, when he has twenty-five or thirty stations stretched along a distance as great as our Atlantic coast-line, and who at the same time must teach Homiletics and Pastoral Theology in a Theological School, direct the publications of the Mission, look after a boys' school, superintend the erection of a building and collect the needful funds for the same, act as treasurer of the Mission and conduct a large correspondence? Yet this is precisely what is attempted in order, as some say, that there may be "unrestricted and undivided authority."

Now this policy must be changed if we expect to infuse the spirit of Methodism into the Italian Conference. It matters not how good and wise and able and scholarly and eloquent such a Presiding Elder may be, he cannot properly attend to all these duties. The bare statement of the case is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Six years ago the Italy Mission was large enough for two Presiding Elders with nothing else to do but attend to the supervision of their Districts. Why this change of policy? Can nobody else be found in the Methodist Episcopal Church fit to be entrusted with a part of these offices? Are none of those on the field

worthy and capable of sharing the responsibility? If not, why select such persons for foreign missionaries? Is it supposed that men of some independence of character and that dare to think for themselves are going to content themselves in the Italy Mission without a share of its responsibility and a voice in shaping its policy? Men that could do so would prove thereby that they are unfit for the duties of missionaries.

“Undivided authority”! There is a fondness in some minds to reduce all things to unity. They don’t see the difference between *union* and *unity*. Harmony means monotony to them, the silencing of all chords but one. By all means let us have union and harmony with resultant strength and melody. Who likes to listen long to a jew’s-harp? Union and harmony imply many minds who think differently and “agree to disagree,” and work for the same end, though in different ways. What reason is there that all the authority and all the offices should be in the hands of one man in the Italy Mission any more than in any other Mission or Conference in America? Suppose an American Conference with one Presiding Elder who is also Treasurer, Director of Publications, Editor and President of the Conference Seminary, having also a chair in the Theological School. Would there not be delightful harmony in that Conference? Such a plan would make a *unity* by reducing the rest of the Conference to zeros or infinitesimal fractions. There is not another Mission field organized on that

basis at present. It was tried in the early days of at least two other Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church with the result that the *unit* had, in three cases we might mention, to be called home, because nobody else could form a union with him, and the men so re-called were some of the best men in our Church and highly honored to-day. The system spoiled them as missionaries. Such an officer must be a Wesley or an Asbury with the necessity of suffering their hardships and privations as the price paid for his kingly sway. Otherwise it is almost certain that he will become overbearing toward some and a prey to the flattery of others. There should be in Italy as in other Missions two or three Presiding Elders, and no one of these should be Treasurer of the Mission. The monthly payments necessitate his presence at home at times when the Presiding Elder should be visiting the stations and assisting in revival work. Then let all bills be endorsed by the Presiding Elder before payment by the treasurer, and then audited by a committee not nominated or suggested by the treasurer himself. The spiritual influence of the Presiding Elder will be better, if he is not also the pay-master of the men on his District. These Presiding Elders ought to visit the stations more frequently and stay longer. They must teach our Italian preachers how to work, and illustrate their instruction by example. Bishop Taylor writes that he has visited every Methodist family in Monrovia. He did it in three weeks besides attending

to other duties. This illustrates the needed work of a Presiding Elder in Italy. Our preachers especially need to be taught how to do pastoral work. During such a three weeks' visitation let him hold meetings every night in a circuit of appointments and teach the people what a real class-meeting and a prayer-meeting are. Make an altar service successful in saving souls, and the preachers will give up their opposition to it. In short the Presiding Elder needed in Italy and everywhere else must do the work of an Evangelist, and he must not be distracted by other duties and must have time for his work. His authority ought to consist in the enduement of power from on high.

We wish to emphasize this as the greatest need of the Mission, at least two American Presiding Elders, another American as editor of the weekly paper, another as Director of the Theological School, another at the head of the College to be established. Five good men at least are imperatively needed, and these should consult together and shape the policy of the Mission. The government of the Mission should be republican and not monarchical. Unlimited monarchies are getting out of style in these latter days.

Supervision should mean something more than looking on and seeing what others do, something more than advising others what to do, something more than the exercise of authority. The supervisor must set the example and show the native preachers how to do the work and encourage them by his assistance. A

good deal of such work must be done in Italy. An American as settled pastor would be a failure in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, but as a novelty, to spend a few weeks at a station and press the work, the American supervisor is much needed. Why do we say *American* supervisor? Because there are absolutely no Italian Methodists yet prepared for such work. If they existed, we would prefer them to Americans. The Italy Mission must be treated as a new Mission, where foundations must be laid. We have now able native Presiding Elders in India and China, but it would have been folly to have appointed such in the early days of these Missions. Ten years more are needed to find an efficient Italian Presiding Elder. Unless the whole spirit and policy of the Mission are changed, we may search in vain for him for another century.

Our Mission work not only in Italy but in all Europe demands for adequate supervision an Episcopal residence on the other side of the Atlantic. A Bishop for Europe, that is not a Bishop, will not do. The thing needed is a full-fledged Bishop who might make his winter residence in Rome and summer residence in Switzerland or Germany. If he already knows German or French, so much the better. Then let him learn Italian and visit the stations often enough and stay long enough to learn their real condition and needs. In four years he would be able to form some independent conception of the state of the work. At

present there is a new Bishop every year. He stays from five days to three weeks. He sees the principal churches and picture galleries. He preaches half a dozen times through an interpreter. That is very good for the people, but the Bishop would learn more if he could hear somebody else preach. He sees the Mission principally with his ears, *i.e.*, he listens to a description and explanation of everything from his constant attendant, the Presiding Elder. Consequently he knows little more about the Mission than his traveling companion wants him to know. The same Presiding Elder writes all the reports for the Missionary Year-book and encouraging squibs for the papers and periodicals. The responsibility of his position blinds him to the true condition of the work. Everything is set forth in the most favorable light. The Bishop goes away having been fêted and complimented by all, and half convinced at least that in such good hands the Mission must prosper in the future, if it has not prospered in the past. This is called episcopal supervision, though, as we have heretofore said, the visit of Bishop Walden was in some respects an exception. Still a residence of four years in Europe would of necessity greatly modify his opinions. We do not write this as a criticism of any Bishop. The system in vogue does not admit of anything better. If some Bishops have staid but a few days, this was because other duties called them elsewhere. There should be a system that will permit a Bishop to properly inves-

tigate the work. A resident Bishop might aid much by his counsels, do much even through an interpreter, and help forward, by his influence in America, many important enterprises of our European Missions.

We are aware that the intimation that even a Bishop may visit Italy and come away with incorrect notions of the real state of the work may be considered presumptuous and be ungraciously received. It is good, however, to "see ourselves as others see us." The opinion of an Italian who has been a preacher in the Italy Conference seventeen years and the only Italian who ever served as Presiding Elder, may here be of interest and profit as touching the matter of supervision. In a printed address to an official he writes as follows, in a style that reminds us of the satires of Horace:

The annual visits of the Bishops and the quarterly visits of the Presiding Elder, in the districts and stations, never modified a state of things that demanded a prompt and energetic provision.

Is the Bishop to come? He is advertised several months in advance. There is diffused a certain ferment of curiosity, preparations are made, circulars are forwarded,—what news? Will he be good, will he be bad? Will he do good to the work of Italy, or harm? Has he influence, is he esteemed, is he learned? Will he be dressed with the miter and the cope, or like any ordinary citizen? Will he have a moustache or chin whiskers like a he-goat?

The Bishop arrives, goes about; curiosity, crowd, ferment, to see the man of the woods, and afterwards—things remain as before.

For the Presiding Elder, in more modest proportions, takes place nearly the same thing.

The Bishop will do nothing out of regard for the local authority; the Conference has its hands tied; the Presiding Elder, guided by regard for his own interests, for the Bishop and for the General Committee, must guard himself well from diminishing the statistics, and from closing up any fruitless station. What would be said? Under Tizio the stations were 100; now under Caio they are 50; therefore Tizio is a great man and Caio is a mediocrity,—without taking into account the causes that produced the difference.

The self-interest of the Presiding Elder does not permit him to cut short, but urges him to let alone, to allow to pass, to extend rather than concentrate. Thus we have a ruinous, enervating expansion instead of a concentric, intensive force. The Conference, meanwhile, is condemned to look on and be silent."

To show further the feeling of the Italian preachers respecting the supervision of the work we quote from a printed address to the annual Conference held in May, 1894, at Milan. The writer is Rev. S. V. Ravi, who has for many years been connected with our Mission and last year represented it before some of our leading churches in the United States. He writes:

I. "I have said that the Italian Conference, if it would see prosperity, should be divided into at least three Districts, having three different Presiding Elders.

II. I have said that the Treasurer of our Conference should occupy himself with all its material interests from Palermo to Geneva, with the direction of our Publishing House, with the publication of our papers, books and pamphlets, and that he may be at most also Professor in our Theological School, but nothing else, because there is a proverb which says, *chi troppo abbraccia poco stringe* (grasp all, lose all). One man alone cannot do everything."

We commend these citations to the thoughtful perusal of the powers that be. We know that they express the real convictions of the Italy Conference.

CHAPTER XV

EVANGELIZATION OF ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS

THE idea is too prevalent that missionary work means work in some far-off land. Hence, the needs of the unconverted who live at the next door are often neglected. Missionary enthusiasts have re-echoed the sentiment that "there are no heathen in America." It is true, thank God, that there are comparatively few pagans in the United States, but in the same sense we might say "There are no heathen in Italy, or Germany, or several other mission fields of ours."

There are plenty of foreigners in America who need evangelization, and not a few of these are Italians. They are landing in New York at the rate of 75,000 annually. There are 70,000 of them in one section of New York City, called "Little Italy." There are 30,000 in Philadelphia, and as many more in Chicago. Other cities have a growing mass of Italian population, and Boston has at least 15,000. There are probably half a million Italians in the United States. What is the Methodist Episcopal Church doing for them?

We have rented halls in New York, Philadelphia,

and New Orleans. In Boston we cannot even afford to hire a hall, but use the audience room of the North-Street Mission, gratuitously offered for our Italian preaching services. We have not yet built a church for the Italians in this country. We have no missions at any other points than those mentioned above. For work in these four cities our General Missionary Society appropriates less than \$4,000 annually. Look at the disproportion. Fifty thousand dollars annually for Italy, and less than four thousand for the Italians in America. Can this be accounted for in any other way than on the supposition that we do not yet realize the duty and the importance of evangelizing the Italians who come to our shores? Oh, let us go to the uttermost parts of the earth, and convert the heathen, and reform the corrupt State religions of Europe, while we leave almost unnoticed the hordes of immigrants that are pouring in upon us! Let us save the Catholics abroad, and do almost nothing to convert the millions of Catholics at home! All this looks more like religious knight-errantry than like real missionary enterprise, prompted by a desire to save sinners wherever they may be found. By all means let us send missionaries so far as possible and wise, to every land that needs them; but let us not overlook the multitudes that God in His Providence has sent to us for some religious purpose.

It may be that the Methodist Episcopal Church is trying to spread herself out over too much surface.

We are not the only band of Christians in the world, and some things may be safely left for other denominations to do. There is no crying need that everything should be done in the Methodist way. The Waldensians, for example, are doing some things in Italy better than we can. The Inner Mission in Germany is doing quite as good work as Methodism in that land. Instead of doing just a little in every land under the sun, would it not be better to mass our forces, and do something well and grandly in a few places? The work that demands immediate attention and strenuous endeavor is the evangelization of the ignorant and superstitious millions who are filling up our cities. We note some reasons for missionary work of a much more extensive and thorough character among the Italians in the United States.

1. Certainly no class of immigrants needs the help of missionaries more than the Italians. It is well known that the greater part of them are from the poor and ignorant classes. In Southern Italy and Sicily, whence the majority of the Italian immigrants come, 80 per cent. are unable to read. Their Catholicism is of the more superstitious type. They are for the most part ignorant of true religion. In morality those who come from the rural districts are superior, of course, to the offscourings of the great cities, and we are told that the great majority are from the peasant class. Still, the national conscience of Italy has been cauterized. Immorality, especially in the forms

of impurity and untruthfulness, is prevalent throughout Catholic countries. Their ignorance keeps them in a religious and moral state that borders close upon paganism. They sorely need the Gospel in its purity and fulness. These Italian immigrants need it more than their average fellow-countrymen in Rome, Naples, and other large cities of Italy, where there are already half a dozen or more evangelical churches.

Their poverty has driven them from their native land to find work. They are willing to do anything to gain bread. They herd in the cities because they have not money enough to get to the far West, or they do not know on what easy terms land may be acquired in this country. During the summer gangs of Italians swarm out from the cities under the direction of some *padrone*, and think themselves fortunate to get \$1.25 per day. During the winter they find but little to do, and many suffer from poverty. Then is the time that they can be reached by the missionary. They need Christian sympathy and aid, and legal protection from fraudulent extortioners no less than religious instruction. They are not ruffians who stealthily wield the stiletto. Few are of this type. They are inoffensive and courteous, unless maltreated or drunken. They flash quickly, talk loudly, and subside speedily.

Their first great need is to learn to read and speak the English language. Until this is done, they will be cheated by the *padroni*, or bosses. To this end evening schools must be established, and these must be

largely missionary and charitable enterprises. They need the gospel of kindness and good works just now, even more than to be talked to about religion. They should be treated with the hospitality due to wayfaring guests. To give them money, soup, or old clothes, does not meet their requirements, and often may do more harm than good. Give them instruction, protection, sympathy—in short, the Gospel in word and deed.

2. Another reason for evangelization among the Italians in America is, that it promises greater and more speedy results than in Italy. They are, in a large measure, released from the control of the priesthood. They come in daily contact with free American thought. They are not bound to Catholicism by the same social and commercial ties as in Italy. Here they can become Protestants without so much danger of financial loss, or of social ostracism. Their love of liberty, nourished by the political events of the last generation, inclines them to throw off the dominion of the priests, and embrace a religion that offers freedom to the whole inner man.

The most zealous adherents of Roman Catholicism are the women, and they hinder their husbands and children from becoming Protestants. Now, these are, for the most part, left behind, till a permanent foothold can be found in America. This release from the restraints of family makes the Italians among us an easier prey to vice and on the other hand more acces-

sible to the influences of the Gospel. Their freedom is their danger, as is so often the case.

These reasons make it more easy to get their attention. The opportunity also to do them acts of kindness, we will not say of charity, is great, and nothing moves them more than applied Christianity. Experience has proved that they can be reached and converted more readily here than in Italy. The results in Boston are of the most encouraging character. Nothing like them has ever been seen in our Mission in Italy.

Rev. Gaetano Conte was transferred from the Italy Conference and began his work in Boston in October, 1893. He was able at once to adapt himself to the needs of his countrymen. He preaches in the North Street Mission Hall. His house at 45 Charter Street is full of Sunday-school children every Sabbath and of youth learning to read, write, etc., four evenings of every week. The other two evenings are occupied with religious services. He has gathered a church of 126 members. His Epworth League under the name of *Circolo Umanitario* has 750 members.

Professor H. G. Mitchell writes thus in *Zion's Herald*:

"The best part of the report from *our* Italian Mission is that there is hope for it. During the last two weeks between fifteen and twenty persons have joined the church, and there is no reason, except in the limited accommodations at our disposal, why the growth should not continue indefinitely. Do the Methodists of Boston realize that it is within their power within five years, to develop in the city and its vicinity

a larger and stronger membership than the united Methodist Churches now have in the whole kingdom of Italy? All that we need to bring about this result is a little more money and enthusiasm."

With sufficient accommodations, a great multitude can be soon gathered into the fold of Christ. Let us not be too anxious to make them Methodists at first. Christianity is a great deal bigger than Methodism. If Methodism will manifest more of Christianity than any other denomination, we shall get all the adherents we can take care of.

This work among the Italian immigrants belongs to both Home and Foreign Missions. Can any one tell why work among the eight thousand Italian emigrants in Geneva, Switzerland, should be called a foreign mission, any more than work among the fifteen thousand Italians in Boston? Can any one suggest any reason why more money should be spent for the former than for the latter, as has actually been the case?

3. The conversion of Italians in America has an important bearing upon the conversion of those in Italy. Why has our work so prospered in Germany and Scandinavia? A principal reason is that it was established and developed largely by immigrants from those countries converted in America, and trained up in the spirit of Methodism, knowing and loving our doctrines, history and modes of evangelization. Moved by love for their countrymen they returned to convey the good tidings of salvation through faith in Jesus

and the testimony of the Spirit. With a thorough knowledge of the language and the people, they were able to do what others have not done, in going to a people of strange speech and customs. One of our most practical Bishops has expressed the conviction that our first set of real Italian Methodist preachers must be trained up in America. There is a spirit of Methodism breathed in our churches and frontier circuits, conferences and camp-meetings, that cannot be imparted in a theological school.

This spirit cannot be well caught by sending over young men from Italy to be educated in our theological schools in America, at the expense of the Educational Society or of private persons. A host of young men would grasp at such an opportunity of travel and education gratis. Many attempts of this kind have been made with young men from various foreign countries, and the results are very discouraging. Most of them prefer to remain in America. Many find they can lecture a little, and get collections by playing upon the sympathies of good-natured and credulous people. They drift away to other churches, or to employments at which they can get more money.

Our theological schools are not good places to make Methodists, but very excellent places to make preachers out of young men who are already Methodists. Let some of the Italian immigrants, who have learned our language, known the sacrifices of the ministry and have proved themselves to be winners of

souls, be transferred to Italy, and we shall see implanted there a real Methodism. The shortest way to get Italy converted is to get the Italians in America converted.

4. The ignorant multitude of foreigners constantly pouring in upon us must be Christianized in order to be Americanized. Our civil as well as religious institutions are at stake. The preservation of the public schools and of the sanctity of the Sabbath, allegiance to the American government rather than to the Pope, the furtherance of the temperance cause, the proper control of so-called socialistic movements, the prevention of riots and anarchy, all demand our utmost endeavors for the salvation and Christian (we may say Protestant) education of the immigrants, for these evils are rife in Roman Catholic countries. If we do not save them they will destroy us. Some would lessen the evil by legal restriction of immigration. This remedy is not sufficient; it is better to welcome and transform them by the power of the Gospel. We see no good reason why America should be reserved for the descendants of those who got here first.

The increase of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is a cause of alarm to many, while many others contemplate this increase with idle indifference. For the most part the Roman Catholics are left to themselves, and scarcely any effort is being made to bring them to a saving faith in Christ. How few Missions there are of any Church whose object is

to convert the Roman Catholic populations! Yet conversion is the only effectual remedy for the threatened evils. The truth seems to be that the Evangelical Church in America does not fully believe in the necessity of conversion on the part of the Roman Catholics in general. It charitably believes that there are many good, sincere Christians among them in spite of the errors of their belief. Such charity is commendable, but ought not to be pressed too far. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If members of any Church do not give evidence in their lives of a regenerated heart, it is better to assume that they need to have the real Gospel of Christ preached to them. If such be not the practical conclusion in America, what need is there of establishing Missions in Italy? To be sure there are good Catholics in every land, and there are some good heathens, who, fearing God and working righteousness, are accepted of Him. All alike need the Gospel in order that more may be saved than otherwise would be, and, if we look not at the issues of the next world, in order that here on this earth may be extended everywhere the true spiritual kingdom of God, a pure and holy Church, with all the temporal blessings that flow from Christian civilization. God's plans include something more than the salvation of individual souls. They mean the regeneration of society and that the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

WE have tried, during our stay in the Italy Mission and in the preparation of this book, to fulfill the duty to which we were called and “to give the Church the benefit of one more intelligent American judgment as to plans and methods of work in evangelization among Roman Catholics.” The reader must judge whether the criticisms herein contained are hasty and injudicious. The statement of facts can be easily confirmed by abundance of testimony.

While we hope to have suffered no abatement of missionary zeal, we think that zeal is more according to knowledge than heretofore. Distance now lends no special enchantment to the view. Our catalogue of missionary heroes has greatly increased, and among the foremost in the list are the names of those who have labored their life long on the small circuits of New England or on the western frontier. No foreign missionaries of our Church have suffered the privations of these. When we call to mind the men who in the Maine Conference have toiled on year after year, receiving a salary of from \$300 to \$500, given

generously and solicited from house to house, in order to afford their Italian brethren in the ministry a salary twice their own, we ask, who are the real missionaries? And we can pick out of the Maine Conference a score of men who in piety, sound sense, and intellectual ability are the peers of any in the Italy Conference. We know personally some who covet, as we did, the honor of being sent abroad as missionaries. Comfort yourselves, brethren. If your soul's ambition is to lay your lives on the altar of sacrifice for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, you cannot find any better place to do it than right where you are. If your desire is to see the fruits of your labor and to leave behind you a goodly company who shall attribute their salvation to your influence, work on in the villages at home. If some little pent-up Utica confines your powers, form a circuit of appointments in the country school-houses about you, and press some of your local preachers, exhorters, and class-leaders into the service as helpers. Or if you are blessed with that El Dorado of many, a city appointment, and still long to preach to foreigners, get an interpreter and organize a Sunday-school and evangelistic services among the French, Italians, Chinese, etc., that are swarming all around you.

It is not our desire to cease missionary endeavor in foreign lands or to lessen contributions for spreading the Gospel throughout the world. We only want a wise expenditure of the money contributed and a

full and impartial report of the work accomplished. Let the mistakes of the past be acknowledged and rectified. It is far better to abandon some fields than to continue a fruitless policy.

This book may lead some to distrust the fullness and accuracy of missionary reports and speeches. There is ground for such distrust. We wish some competent person would give us an impartial history of the Bulgarian and Liberian Missions. We doubt not it would contribute ultimately to greater success in those lands. We have many reasons for thinking that the same erroneous policy that has hindered prosperity in Italy has prevailed and in some measure still prevails in these Missions. When Bishop Taylor says in one of his reports that in Liberia we have raised up a great company of "pedantic beggars" we want to know the reason why. We want something more than the report of a Bishop who has surveyed the Mission with a spy-glass from the deck of a vessel. And we want from all our Missions more than the report of a tourist or prejudiced superintendent. A minority report is also frequently very useful.

And now may God bless every sincere and faithful worker who, however unsuccessfully, is striving to build up His kingdom on the earth, and may the Church at home and abroad purify herself even as He is pure, and so be filled with wisdom and clothed with power for the conquest of the world for Christ.

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